GEOGRAPHIES OF JUSTICE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION 10



They Saved the Crops

LABOR, LANDSCAPE, AND THE STRUGGLE OVER INDUSTRIAL FARMING IN BRACERO-ERA CALIFORNIA

DON MITCHELL

VISIT…



They Saved the Crops

GEOGRAPHIES OF JUSTICE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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DON MITCHELL

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History and geography . . . cannot be easily separated from one another. The environments we live and work in . . . are in a very real sense the present past. We live in and among the institutions and spaces that have been bequeathed to us by what came before. But geography is more than the sedimented spaces produced in the recent and distant past. Geography also sculpts the future. The spaces we create place possibilities and constraints on that which is yet to come, because the world of the future must, quite literally, be built upon the spaces of the past. To change the future, then, means changing the material spaces of the present.

Trevor Paglen, *Blank Spots on the Map* (2009), 280

The simple facts of the matter are, however, that California's agriculture has seldom sought to adapt its economic and cultural structure to the needs of man; for the past 90 years it has been generally successful in adapting men to the structure insofar, at least, as developing and utilizing an abundant supply of mobile, inexpensive, seasonally hired labor.

California Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1 (1961), 162

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	*Assembly Bill*
AFL	*American Federation of Labor*, parent of NFLU/NAWU, merged with CIO in 1955.
AFL-CIO	*American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations*.
AMC	*Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen*, by whom NAWU was absorbed in 1960, ending the latter's nearly fifteen-year attempt to organize farm workers in California.
AWA	*Agricultural Workers Association*, a largely Mexican American social movement and proto-union in Stockton, active in 1958–59 before ceding the ground to AWOC.
AWOC	*Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee*, active in organizing California farm workers from 1959 to 1964.
BAE	*Bureau of Agricultural Economics*, a research division in the USDA.
BES	*Bureau of Economic Security*, of the U.S. Department of Labor, eventually the federal bureaucratic home of the bracero program.
CCIH	*California Commission of Immigration and Housing*, Progressive-era state agency charged with (among other things) inspecting farm labor camps and governing farm labor relations; succeeded in part by DIH, which was housed within DIR.
CFBF	*California Farm Bureau Federation*, unlike many state federations, dominated by large growers.
CFL	*California Federation of Labor*, long opposed to organizing farm workers, it began to change its tune in the late 1940s.
CIO	*Congress of Industrial Organizations*, merged with the AFL in 1955.
CSO	*Community Service Organization*, an Alinskyite Latino organization founded by Fred Ross and Edward Roybal, early home to César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, and active in organizing domestic workers, especially in the Ventura-Oxnard area.
CVEA	*Central Valley Empire Association*, a key growers association in the San Joaquin Valley, and an instigator of the Governor's

	Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley.
DGA	*Desert Growers Association*, with IVFA, one of the two big growers associations in the Imperial.
DIH	California *Division of Immigration and Housing*, successor to many of the functions of CCIH, when the latter was folded into the DIR. Like CCIH that preceded it and DoH that followed it, it had primary responsibility for farm worker housing, overseeing field sanitation, and the like.
DIR	California *Department of Industrial Relations*, a broad-based agency of the state government charged with a range of functions stretching from investigating industrial accidents to inspecting worker housing, to inspecting motor courts and other commercial lodging.
DoH	California *Division of Housing*, part of DIR, successor to some aspects of the DIH, especially the mandate to inspect labor camps and enforce the labor camp code.
FHA	*Federal Housing Authority*.
FLA	National *Farm Labor Authority*, an agency Carey McWilliams hoped would be created at the outset of World War II, but never was.
FLSA	*Fair Labor Standards Act* (1938).
FPC	California *Farm Production Council*, the key state agency charged with constructing farm worker housing (among other responsibilities) during World War II. It was in operation from 1943 to 1947.
FPS	*Farm Placement Service* of the California Department of Employment, a state-level arm of the USES charged with both placing domestic workers in farm jobs and administering the bracero program, duties often in conflict with each other.
FSA	*Farm Security Administration*, administered the bracero program in its first year, until being stripped of its power by Congress in 1943.
FTA	*Food, Tobacco and Agricultural and Allied Workers of America*, expelled from the CIO in 1950.
HR	*House Resolution*.
INS	*Immigration and Naturalization Service*, parent organization of the Border Patrol.
IPP	*Independent Progressive Party*, Henry Wallace's 1948 party and

	frequent target of red-baiting by anticommunist leftists and liberals.
IUD	*Industrial Union Department*, created when the AFL and CIO merged at CIO insistence and a general organizing body within the Federation until 1999.
IVFA	*Imperial Valley Farmers Association*, with DGA the major growers association in the Imperial.
IWW	*Industrial Workers of the World*, radical labor union active in the California fields around World War I.
NAACP	*National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*, active in exposing horrid conditions for workers in the Peach Bowl in 1957.
NAWU	*National Agricultural Workers Union*, the name adopted by NFLU in 1952.
NFLU	*National Farm Labor Union* (AFL), outgrowth of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union and chartered in 1946 to organize farm workers nationally; name changed to the National Agricultural Workers Union (NAWU) in 1952.
NFWA	*National Farm Workers Association*, founded by César Chávez in 1962, forerunner to and allied organization with the UFW.
PHA	Local *public housing authorities*, usually county based, and in rural California frequently controlled by growers associations.
PL	*Public Law*.
RFLOAC	*Regional Foreign Labor Operations Advisory Committee*, established by BES in 1954 to better coordinate BES service on behalf of growers.
S Res	*Senate Resolution*.
STFU	*Southern Tenant Farmers Union*, from which the NFLU was launched.
UCAPAWA	*United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America* (CIO), active in the 1930s–40s, especially in the canneries, and especially successful in organizing *Mexicanas*.
UFW	*United Farm Workers*, founded out of the merger of AWOC and NFWA.
UPWA	*United Packinghouse Workers of America* (CIO), active in the 1950s and 1960s, and foe of NAWU in several jurisdictional battles.
USDA	*U.S. Department of Agriculture*.
USDL	*U.S. Department of Labor*.
USES	*U.S. Employment Service*, a branch of the Department of Labor,

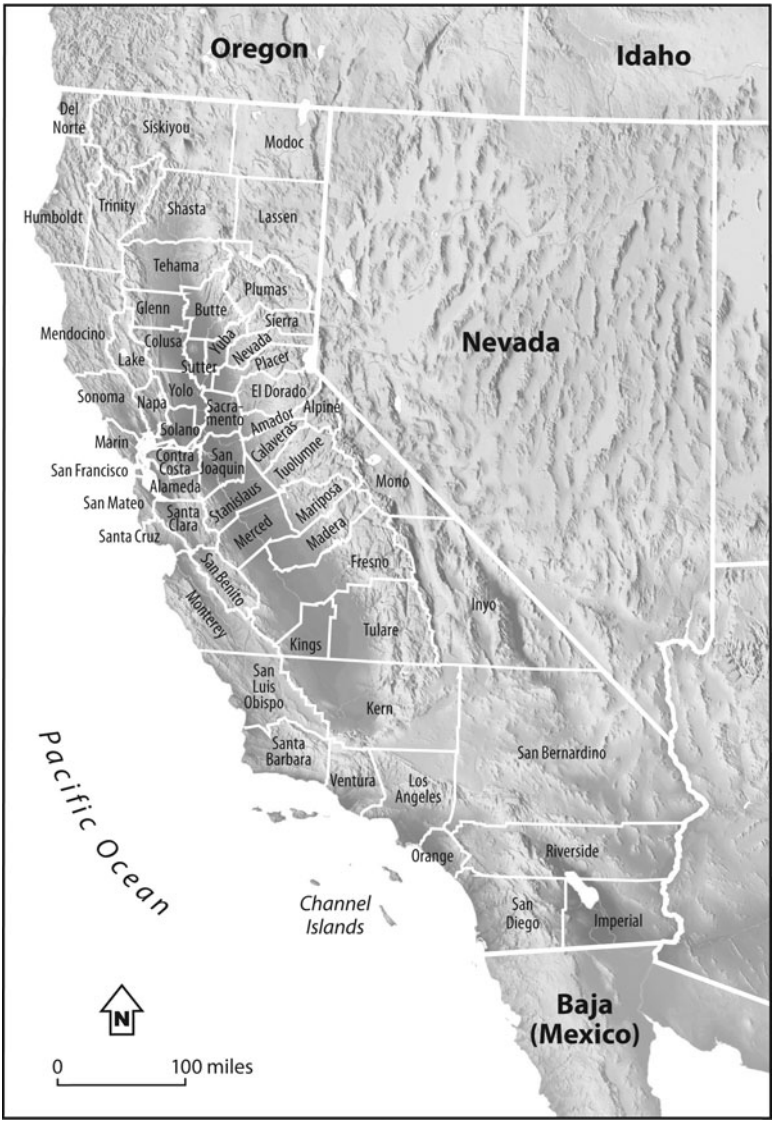
worked cooperatively with state public employment services in the recruitment of domestic workers; frequently courted controversy because of its role in certifying labor shortages.

WFA *War Food Administration*, took over administration of the bracero program from the FSA and governed it until the program officially expired in 1947.

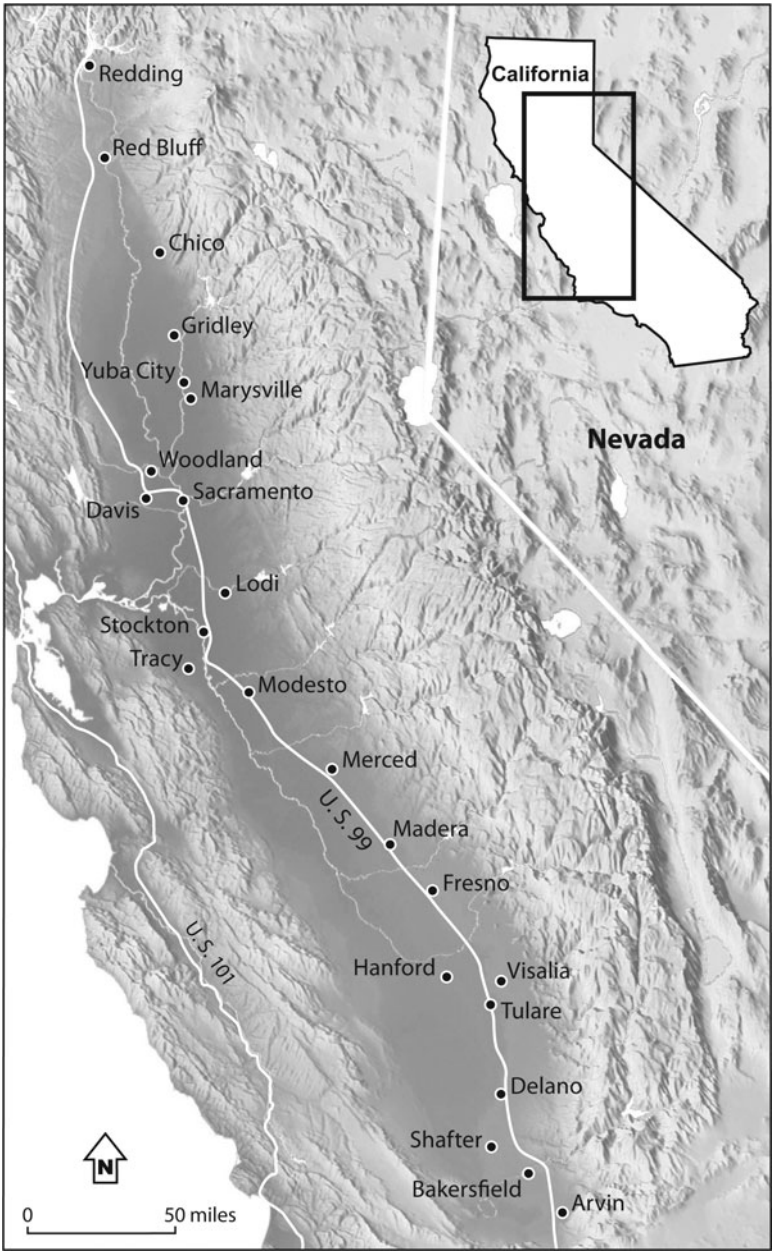
WPA *Works Progress Administration.*


Oregon
Idaho
Redding
Nevada
Sacramento
San Francisco
Stockton
Oakland
San Jose
California
U.S. 101
Fresno
Bakersfield
Pacific Ocean
U.S. 99
Los Angeles
Channel Islands
San Diego
El Centro
Mexicali
Baja (Mexico)
N
0
100 miles

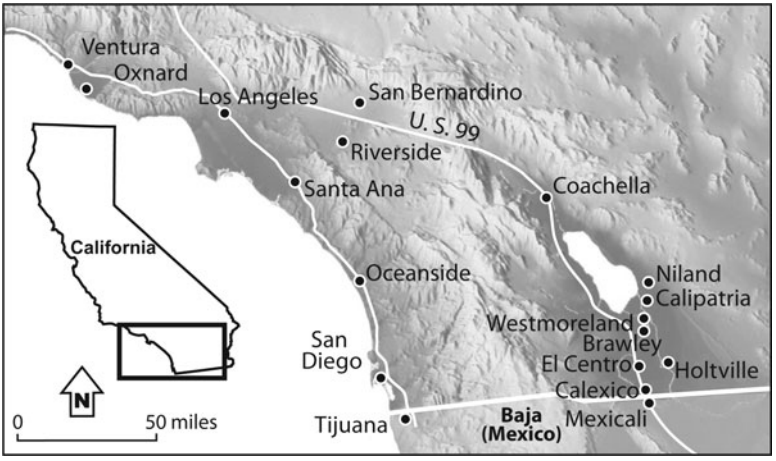
California



California Counties



California Central Valley



California Southland



California Salinas Valley

They Saved the Crops

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INTRODUCTION

"Reality Soon Caught Up with Us"

Octavio Rivas Guillen arrived in Stockton, California, on September 29, 1942, to work in the sugar beet harvest. He was among the first trainload of Mexican National workers to arrive in the United States in an emergency wartime program of agricultural and railroad labor importation. Eventually known as the bracero program, the systematic importation of Mexican agricultural workers long outlasted the war. By the time Congress finally ended the program in 1964, some 4.75 million short-term contracts for braceros had been issued.* Rivas was impressed with his reception. A welcoming party met the train; a banquet was organized in the workers' honor. Rivas's reception was not extraordinary: welcoming parties like the one that met him were common in the first months of the program. In a propaganda piece published in *Survey Graphic* a year later, Anne Roller Issler wrote that early braceros "were welcomed by a band and banqueted at employer expense. . . . There were loud *vivas*, for President Roosevelt, President Avila Comacho, the United Nations. And the next day the good neighbors went to work." Once at work, Rivas wrote a few months later, "reality soon caught up with us."[1]

This book is about that reality. It has two mutually supportive goals. The first is to tell the story of the bracero program as it was struggled over and unfolded in California. The second is to explain why it was struggled over and un-

* Millions of others, men and women, entered the United States illegally for work. The fate of these undocumented workers was closely tied to the fortunes of the bracero program as becomes clear in what follows. The railway importation program ended in April 1946. While I refer to the bracero program in the singular, it was in reality a suite of programs over its history. From 1942 to 1943, it was governed solely by a diplomatic agreement between Mexico and the United States; from 1943 to 1947, diplomatic agreements were supplemented by Public Law 45. After the expiration of PL 45 in 1947, the program was operated by U.S. agencies on an ad hoc basis (though still governed by various international agreements). In 1951, the program was placed back on statutory footing with the passage of PL 78, a Korean wartime emergency measure, which had to be renewed every two years. With hiccups (detailed in later chapters) it was thus renewed regularly until 1964, when it was finally defeated by a coalition of "anti-bracero" forces. It is appropriate to refer to a single bracero program both because that is how contemporaries understood it over its life course and because there were strong continuities across each of its iterations.

folded as it did. What was the historical and geographical logic, and what were the specific problems confronting farmers and workers alike, which shaped the program over the course of its life? To meet these goals I adopt two narrative strategies. The bulk of the book—its real meat—is a detailed history of the bracero program in California, in essence, the development of a spatially sensitive story about just what happened. The bracero program was complex and mutable, and understanding how it evolved and mutated over time is essential not only for a clearer understanding of the history of an important era in agricultural California's development—indeed, I argue that this period was pivotal in the development of the agribusiness landscape we have since come to take for granted in California—but also how the specific structures and practices governing any "guest worker" program must be understood if we are to develop a clearer understanding of how they operate in general within the overarching practices of labor exploitation in capitalism.

Details matter. While the bracero program as a whole was created through legislative action (time and time again), as well as through high-level diplomatic negotiation between Mexico and the United States, its reality—the reality that confronted workers like Octavio Rivas Guillen—was shaped by the everyday actions not only of workers (both imported and domestic) but also, among others, of large and small growers seeking to sow a profit; government bureaucrats and officials at the local, state, and federal levels juggling competing political interests and seeking to administer the program; union organizers attempting to organize farm workers; social and political activists concerned with the program's seemingly endemic injustices; and local judges and police, who were often closely aligned with grower interests. For each of these players in the struggle over the shape of capitalist agriculture and its labor relations, the bracero program was mostly known, confronted, and especially *felt*, as a series of problems: how to get selected as a bracero in the first place; how to make enough money to survive the off-season and send some home to family in Mexico; how to assure a reliable and appropriately priced labor force; how to administer a complex and often hugely contradictory program; how to organize extremely poor, highly mobile workers (often in the face of labor establishment condescension); how to protect the interests of property against perceived threats of violence; and so forth. I have endeavored as much as possible to tell the story of the bracero era in California from the perspectives of the players, seeking to lay out precisely what confronted various actors "on the ground" over the quarter century of the program's evolution—in the fields and sheds, in the government offices, in the makeshift meeting halls, in the labor camps, in the ditch-bank settlements, and in the unincorporated shacktowns

within which California farm workers tried to live as best they could. To do so has required writing a detailed historical geography of the program's evolving machinations as well as the multifaceted campaigns for and against it (in Congress as well as in the fields and labor camps).

These details have been constructed out of numerous archival sources, including records of California bureaucratic agencies (as well as the U.S. Department of Labor [USDL]) that were deeply involved in administering the bracero program; the records of various gubernatorial administrations as they sought to negotiate the political currents the program stirred up; the records of commissions established to study the effects of the program on the political economy of farming and the fate of farm workers; and the papers of early administrators of the program (like Ralph Hollenberg of the Farm Security Administration [FSA]), growers (like C. C. Teague of Sunkist and Limoneira Ranch), union activists (especially Ernesto Galarza, whose papers provide an inestimably rich trove of materials relating to the program and era), and various other activists (ranging from UC Berkeley's influential Paul Taylor to the National Catholic Rural Life Conference's Reverend James Vizzard). Such a diversity of archival sources has allowed for the construction of a narrative sensitive to the real and felt needs and interests of the players, each differently situated vis-à-vis the political, economic, and juridical structures of the program, and thus each facing it down in different ways. Archival sources have been supplemented by innumerable government, university, and other reports and analyses made in the heat of controversy—ranging from the final report of a President's Commission on Migratory Labor strongly advocating the end of the program in 1951 to Giannini Foundation reports on the disaster that ending it in 1964 would be for California farmers, and from scholarly analyses of the effects of and pressures for mechanization in particular crops to California Senate fact-finding reports seeking to comprehend the system and history of California agriculture in its entirety—that shed light on and put into context the day-to-day struggles over the program revealed in the archival collections. And as a counterpoint to these sorts of sources, I also draw upon published and otherwise readily available oral histories and remembrances of bracero workers, farmers, politicians, and others. Finally, news accounts have proved invaluable, often providing telling details not available elsewhere, as well as providing a window on the "common sense" through which the program was publicly understood.* All this has been

* Many of these news stories have been located in the archival collections themselves, and I have indicated in the endnotes when this has been the case. I also conducted a fairly exhaustive search for relevant stories in the *New York Times*, as well as a more selective search in the *Los Angeles Times* (the reason for this is purely pragmatic: I have free access to the archives

supplemented, of course, by the rich secondary literature on the bracero program in its many facets.[2]

Sometimes the actions of those directly involved in, or otherwise seeking to understand the evolution of, the program—union activists like Ernesto Galarza, for example, or grower-lobbyists like C. C. Teague, or critics like Carey McWilliams—demanded they develop what Denis Cosgrove called "the morphological eye": the ability to see out of a welter of details and within the exigencies of the moment, a whole, a pattern, a structured, shaped coherence. Such a morphological eye allows its possessor to see the shape and structure of the landscape within which she or he is operating; but especially it allows its possessor to plot strategy. What such analysts saw—and how they explained what they saw—has been of inestimable value to me, especially since a morphological eye of sorts is also required to tell the story—to organize the details—of the bracero era in California. No story structures itself and no story naturally or innocently answers the question of its own explanatory value. All stories are constructed, and so the question becomes one of the theoretical structure that gives it form. The structure that has shaped the story told in this book is best framed by the question that guided my research in the archives and among the other sources that made its telling possible: *how, over the course of the bracero program, was the California agricultural landscape changed (or not)—why, and to what end did it change (or not)?*

The second narrative strategy I adopt is thus to present a set of more theoretical, explanatory arguments that derive from and reflect on the historical-geographical narrative present in the main chapters. Between each main chapter I therefore present short, and I hope sharp, "interchapters" developing a series of theoretical arguments whose aim is to lay bare three things: first, what the California agricultural landscape *is*; second, why understanding the bracero program through a dialectical theory of the (ongoing) production of this

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of the former but not the latter, and my budget for this research did not stretch far enough for a complete search of the *Los Angeles Times*). I relied heavily on the California newspapers available through newspaperARCHIVE.com. In California, available newspapers are skewed toward rural and small-town papers. This was to my advantage since such papers, though relying heavily on the newswires, often also provided keen local insight into live struggles, as well as a means to check dates and other empirical details related to archival materials. But as anyone who has used newspaperARCHIVE.com knows, coverage is spotty, the quality of the PDFs poor, and the search function unreliable. I have no way of knowing how representative or exhaustive my search of California papers has been; I have thus always deployed the articles unearthed carefully. But this problem plagues any archival research, and I have addressed it in the standard way: always seeking as many sources as possible, sources that often approach issues from widely divergent political perspectives, to substantiate points of fact.

landscape is vital to understanding what the bracero program *was*; and, therefore, third, how understanding both of these in tandem allows an answer to the question: how, why, and to what end did the landscape change (or not) over the course of the bracero era?[3]

The landscape is a complex, structured, contradictory totality. The term signifies, first, the arrangement of things on the land: fields, packing sheds, roads, houses, irrigation canals, power lines, and so forth. It names the totality of the view—its constituents as well as their order—but it also points to the importance of the *look* or *style* of the land, that is, the social or cultural significance of the view (and the way it is represented *as* a landscape). That significance in turn is in part a function of the landscape's *morphology*: the shape and structure of a place, as well as the processes by which it has been shaped and structured, carved out of the physical environment, as it were. Putting all that together, and showing why it matters, is the point of deploying the "morphological eye."[4]

Yet putting it all together raises significant narrative challenges. All we can ever really see is a partial view on the totality that is the landscape and that was Rivas's reality. To use Bertell Ollman's metaphor, a totality is like a house. As we stand outside and look through a window, we are afforded a view—perhaps of a part of the kitchen or a stretch of hallway—of only a part, not of all of the internal structure of reality. We can then move along to another window, affording yet another partial view, and then to another, and so forth. After a while, by dialectically relating these partial views, and especially by paying attention to their intersections (which when speaking of social practices rather than architectural structures are frequently contradictory), we can build up a view onto the *internal processes* that structure the totality, and thus onto the totality itself, not so much as an inert structure, but as a dynamic integration of process and form.[5] The goal of the theoretical "interchapters" is to provide these different views into the totality, one after the other, building on the historical narratives that come before and establishing some perspective on those that are to follow, thereby allowing, by the end, for a much fuller view not only of the mid-twentieth-century California agricultural landscape, but why it is shaped the way it is. In other words, *They Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California* seeks to provide a deep historical-geographic account of the bracero *program*, and a historical-theoretical argument about the reality that was the bracero *era*.

For Octavio Rivas Guillen, that reality included a chance to interact with Americans he professed to admire, and to learn something about the culture north of the border. But it also included back-breaking stoop work in the beet fields for which he and his compatriots, both in those early months of the pro-

gram and throughout its whole existence, were not infrequently bilked out of some of their pay.* For growers in California, that reality included a constant effort to secure a flexible, cheap, controlled, and especially docile labor force as the agricultural system—a system not only of labor relations, but also technological inputs, land tenure patterns, urban-rural social relations, state subsidy and regulation, and marketing practices—was remade as a specifically modern, industrial form of farming. For officials in local, state, and federal governments, from local social service workers to the governor, and from labor camp inspectors to the secretaries of agriculture and labor, that reality took innumerable shapes, ranging from practical problems of how to assure decent sanitary facilities in labor camps, to the day-to-day administration of what became a highly politicized program of foreign labor importation, even as domestic workers† found it harder and harder to find enough work to make a living wage.[6]

For California, that reality (as will be seen) was both a preserved and entrenched landscape of agrarian capitalist accumulation—the bracero era was decisive in cementing into place a particularly large-scale, industrialized form of agriculture dependent on highly exploitative labor processes, when it did not have to be that way—and a transformed one. As geographer William Preston

* The record of the bracero program is rife with complaints—many proven—of underpayment; a number of these will be cited in the pages that follow. Perhaps the most infamous wage-skimming practice centered on the 10 percent of wages that growers withheld (during the years 1942–47), to be transferred to the Banco de Crédito Agrícola de México, and "to be refunded to him on his return to his place of origin, or as soon as practical." It is likely that much of the withheld money was never transferred by employers. It is indisputable that very few braceros received their withheld wages. More than sixty years after the withholding program ended, thousands of braceros were still fighting to regain their withheld wages. In 2005, the Mexican government agreed to pay former braceros living in Mexico USD $3,500 to settle their claims on these back wages. A second legal settlement in October 2008 required the Mexican government to pay former braceros living in the United States USD $3,500. But in both cases stringent identity and documentation requirements still make it unlikely that many braceros or their beneficiaries will receive this payment; see Pam Belluck, "Settlement Will Allow Thousands of Mexican Workers in U.S. to Collect Back Pay," *New York Times*, October 16, 2008, A19; Randall Archibald, "Owed Back Pay, Guest Workers Comb the Past," *New York Times*, November 24, 2008, A1. The rules governing the withholding are detailed in the "Individual Work Agreement," clause 5, reprinted appendix A, FSA, "Consolidated Progress Report" (see note 2).

† Over the course of the era, imported workers were called "Nationals," "Mexican Nationals," or "braceros"; workers already resident in the state, regardless of race, ethnicity, or citizenship status, were called "domestic workers," with the exception of undocumented workers of recent origin who were called "illegals" or (by their supporters and opponents alike) "wetbacks."

wrote about a generation of change—the generation that began with the bracero program—in the Tulare Basin,

> change has been most drastic in the landscapes of the countryside, where intensification no longer brings the growth of rural population nor the spread of more settled landscapes. As parcels are consolidated into corporate operations, the identity of each piece of land—its fences, its farmsteads, its trees and terrain—is lost or obliterated. New identities, expressed in modern buildings, machine lots, signs, and cyclone fences, are imprinted all at once; since fewer people are working the land, few new farmhouses are built. The working landscape of the countryside is simplified as the vestiges of its historical development are destroyed. Accompanying the loss of residual landscapes and places is a rapid erosion of the memories of the past, memories built by direct and intimate relationships with the land.

Now "people no longer speak of the Tulare Lake Basin or the Tulare Valley, but rather the region must usually be described as 'halfway between Fresno and Bakersfield.'"[7]

Landscape—Rivas's reality—is a solid thing. It is difficult, or at least very costly, to alter. Indeed, as will become clear, growers worked very hard to assure that key features of it were *not* altered, at least if they were features desirable in the struggle to grow a profit in the field under terms that they alone set. But, not at all contradictorily, change, transformation, and evolution of the landscape, in one form or another, are always constant. The important point, then, is to explain the dialectic between change and fixity, to examine "the various forms . . . change assumes and why it may *appear* to have stopped," as Ollman puts it, and concomitantly to explain how "permanences" in the landscape (as David Harvey, following Alfred North Whitehead, calls them) are made (and for what reason) and how they are preserved (and in whose interest). Preston writes of the coming of corporate farming to the Tulare Basin in the postwar period: "Wherever corporate farming exists, the old landscapes are wiped away, and the power of the corporation is expressed far beyond the boundaries of the fields."[8]

"Power" is the key word. Who has the power, and under what conditions, to *direct* change in the landscape, or to preserve the morphology that already is? Rivas and his *compadres* had a little. Within a week of their arrival in Stockton and Sacramento, a number of those first braceros went on strike. Rivas and the other workers had been contracted to California Field Crops, Inc., a labor supply contractor for several large sugar beet producers. On October 6, 1942, the FSA, which operated the importation program, called a conference with

the chief of California Field Crops and the Mexican consul to try to convince striking braceros to go back to work. In this first strike, workers complained of not being paid "on the same basis" as other workers in the beet fields. Domestic workers were paid by the hour; Mexican National workers, most of whom were inexperienced in beet work, were paid by the ton harvested. The different pay methods, workers thought, violated the "individual work agreement" they had signed, an agreement that provided that "the worker will receive the same wages as those paid to other workers in the area of employment for similar work." The strike was resolved when California Field Crops agreed that workers in Stockton, Sacramento, and Chico could elect to be paid by the ton or at the sixty-five-cents-per-hour rate that domestic workers received.* For most braceros, the hourly rate was the better deal.[9]

This settlement, however, did not prove to be the end of labor unrest. Just as soon as another trainload of Mexican National workers arrived in California, this time leaving the braceros in the Salinas Valley, growers were subject to "work stoppages . . . occurring sporadically and daily," according to FSA officials. Besides wages, workers objected to living conditions in the camps, short work hours, the quality and quantity of the food they were served, and the requirement in some camps (contrary to the rules of the program) that they only eat at the camp and not in town—complaints that would be repeated time and again over the course of the program. On top of that, workers were illegally breaking their contracts to work in other, better-paying crops. And some sugar beet growers appeared to be "pirating" braceros from other growers, inciting not only the wrath of their colleagues, but defying a contract that had been negotiated on their collective behalf at the highest international levels. In response, some beet growers were already talking about deportation: Mexican National workers, they thought, were more trouble than they were worth. According to the FSA's Edward Routledge, the manager of Spreckles Sugar in the Salinas Valley (who was also the assistant secretary of California Field Crops) would rather "see the crops rot in the fields" than give in to the sixty-five-cents-per-hour rate in his district.[10]

* The manager of California Field Crops, Earl Coke (whom we meet again later), noted in a radio interview at the end of October that with two weeks' training, imported workers were "able to earn close to 60 cents an hour on a piece work basis, which would seem to justify their employment in this occupation," and which also confirms why striking for the sixty-five-cents-per-hour wage was so important. "How Mexican Workers Saved California's Sugar Beet Crop," Round-Table Radio Discussion, KPO and NBC Pacific Coast Network, October 31, 1942, transcript in Hollenberg Papers, Box 4, File 3. This broadcast was part of a concerted propaganda effort that included newspaper and magazine articles, newsreels, and radio broadcasts.

As will be seen in chapter 2, one of the upshots of these strikes was a concerted effort by the newly formed Farm Production Council (FPC),* a state-level war-emergency agency, to rapidly rebuild new, and rehabilitate old, labor camps up and down the state to better house imported workers—to transform the reality that confronted the workers who came after Rivas. Though Governor Earl Warren, who assumed office in January 1943, declared that bad housing conditions for agricultural workers were "inevitable," and though FPC was not infrequently chastised by the State Division of Housing (DoH) for running substandard camps, FPC built housing for some 38,000 workers in its first 18 months, the majority of them braceros. In particular, FPC concentrated on "holding camps" for Mexican National workers from which braceros could be distributed to specific growers, camps that became models for growers association–run camps in later years of the program. FPC also deeply involved itself in feeding braceros through the establishment of commissaries as well as the development of approved menus. The quality and quantity of the food served to braceros was an early—and everlasting—source of unrest (and also another area where growers and their accomplices proved adept at skimming what was owed Mexican National workers). Worker intransigence—the early strikes—in other words, instigated landscape change, in this case at the level of the labor camp.[11]

This kind of change was dialectically related to a whole suite of other changes, ranging from developments in cultivation practices, to new regional patterns of crop planting, to the development of new methods of picking and packing, to the creation of new transportation technologies and networks. Quite often each of these changes and experiments seemed, and was, piecemeal, contingent, even haphazard. Each developed as a specific answer to specific problems and crises: strikes among newly imported braceros; seeming shortages of workers in specific crops; ploys by farmers to gain an advantage over competitors; an opportunity to break union control in packing sheds; and so forth. Interests conflicted and collided, and out of this conflict and collision

* As will become clear, the FPC was exceptionally important in establishing the conditions that allowed for successful labor importation during the war years. It was established in March 1943, just a few months after these first strikes by Mexican National workers. It quickly took on the task of building and operating farm labor camps throughout the state, many of them for braceros. For the rationale behind the establishment of the FPC—that without it, "fertile land will lie idle, crops will not be harvested, farmers will lose not only their investments but also the results of their labor, there will be a shortage of food and people may go hungry"—see Governor Earl Warren to Senator George Hatfield, March 24, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 725.

resulted the jumble that was the shape and structure—the morphology—of the landscape.

If braceros and other workers possessed *some* power to shape the morphology of the landscape, to make it over in their interests, growers possessed a whole lot more. Domestic workers knew this. As the first United States–Mexico agreement to send agricultural and railroad workers north was being negotiated in Mexico in the summer of 1942, one domestic worker, Miguel N. Benítez, who had worked in the California fields since 1909, wrote to the Mexican president, General Manuel Avila Camacho, about how the California agricultural system worked. "The Chambers of Commerce and the 'Growers' Association,'" he wrote, "utilize the simplest of systems to satisfy their inhuman ambitions: Do you need 100 workers here? Well, let's bring in 200 or 500 from where we can get them by promising high wages. Once they're here, they can compete among themselves and we won't have to pay them more than a third of what we were promising, or even less, because the same hunger that brought them here will oblige them to leave their last cent to businesses here. They will feel fortunate to be able to work for whatever they are paid, even if it's only for two days a week or two days a month. This is the truth of the need to import Mexican field hands." Both Benítez and his son were dying of tuberculosis "contracted in the unhealthy shacks where agricultural workers were housed in California" and he was direct in his assessment of what conditions in the fields were like. "The life of field workers in the U.S. is disgraceful! When they work, they live in agony, and when they don't they agonize and die, or watch their families die without knowing how to avoid it."[12]

Yet, and despite the fact that both FSA and DoH showed there was no absolute farm labor shortage in California as the United States entered World War II, growers were remarkably successful in convincing federal and state officials—to say nothing of the Mexican government (which had its own interests in the deal)—of the need for massive labor importation. Indeed, they convinced the governments that American farming in general, and California farming quite particularly, would itself "agonize and die" during the war emergency if new labor sources were not cultivated. The very system—the landscape—of California agriculture was at risk. Or so it seemed.[13]

The salient fact of life for domestic workers like Benítez was just how unsettled it was, how their relative disempowerment was a function of their peripatetic life, even as (as we will see) their peripatetic life was a function of their relative disempowerment. For large numbers of farm workers, constant mobility was the norm. This mobility, this unsettledness, was, it seemed, *necessary* to the production of profit in the fields of California. "Throughout the foreseeable

future," wrote Harry Drobish of the California Relief Administration in 1935, "it will be necessary that laborers shall migrate to serve the crops of California. The nature of crop plantings, which can only be altered slowly and within the limits of soil, water, and climate, and of economic structure, compels labor mobility." As California historian Kevin Starr explained for the decade before the war: "Thirty full-time workers . . . could run a thousand-acre peach ranch. Two hundred workers, however, were needed for the pruning season; seven hundred for thinning; and nearly two thousand for the harvest. A twenty-acre hop ranch, staffed by twelve full-time employees, needed five hundred workers at harvest time."[14]

One reason that so many workers were needed at harvest time was that the harvest could be exceedingly short. That thousand-acre peach ranch might have an effective picking season—the time when the fruit is ripe enough to be picked, but not so ripe as to be vulnerable to spoilage before going to market—of perhaps two to three weeks. In 1949, during the month of peak labor demand (October), farms in the San Joaquin Valley alone employed some 257,000 workers, of whom 159,000 (61.2%) were temporary; by contrast, in the trough month (March), 118,000 agricultural workers were employed, of whom only 25,500 were temporary. Weekly labor need in Valley counties varied over the course of the year from below 3 percent to above 330 percent of average. In other words, many farm workers had to migrate, at least if they wanted work.[15]

Most of these migrant workers were employed by a minority of growers. In the same year that Drobish declared that the nature of crop plantings compelled labor mobility, studies showed that "three-fourths of all harvest labor was hired by a tenth of farmers who controlled over half of all production." Not so much nature, then, as economic structure was decisive in who moved, where, and how. A postwar study found that among temporary domestic workers in the San Joaquin Valley, the most frequent length of stay was two months (26%); 63 percent of these workers spent fewer than five months in the Valley; and fewer than 5 percent spent all their time in it—statistics that say nothing about the degree of movement *within* the Valley, which stretches some 250 miles north to south.[16]

Such mobility, always a part of the agricultural system in California, was massively intensified by the bracero program, as even relatively settled domestic workers were uprooted in some parts of the state (especially the southernmost Imperial Valley) and sent on the road in search of work. Ernesto Galarza, who spent much of his life trying to organize California farm workers (and to eliminate the bracero program), wrote accurately of the "massive uprooting that followed the introduction of the bracero system . . . , by which entire towns in

rural areas were gradually deserted, their residents denied the work that the braceros were contracted to do at lower wages." As will become clear in all that follows, though never uncontested, the bracero program was a means by which (especially large) growers remade the California landscape. When the program ended, a new (or as I argue, an "ever new, ever same") landscape had been emplaced; but it was a landscape—a "way of life" for many growers—that as the pool of braceros was legally placed off limits at the end of 1964 seemed now to be imperiled.[17]

Imperiled, it seemed, was the reality that Rivas and his millions of *compadres* helped create over the twenty-two years of the program, a reality that thoroughly entrenched the reality that confronted them when they first arrived. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, "California is probably the most intensely farmed landscape outside the tropical rice zones," as geographer Richard Walker has written. "It accounts for roughly 12% of the agricultural output of the United States, and supplies one-third of the table food consumed by Americans." It is "the richest agricultural region in the world," confirms environmental scientist Garrison Sposito. The kind of farming conducted in California, as cemented into place by the bracero program—a model of farming defined by the creation of large single-crop districts across the state—is, according to historian Steven Stoll, "an enormous event in the history of the North American environment."[18]

And yet, importantly, despite the creation of these single-crop districts, the great critic of twentieth-century California, Carey McWilliams, accurately declared the sheer diversity of California agriculture to be "extraordinary." While it is true that hundreds of thousands of acres in a locale might be devoted to a single crop—tomatoes in the western part of the San Joaquin, cotton in the southern part, for example—it is also the case that far more commercial crops are grown in California than in any other state.* As McWilliams notes, "the diversity of California agriculture is a . . . direct reflection of the amazing range of environmental factors to be found in the state. California has the highest peaks, the lowest valleys, the driest desert, and some of the rainiest sections of the [contiguous] United States. The variety of soils is so great that California is one of the world's great laboratories for the study of soil-forming and soil-reacting

* At the time McWilliams was writing (1949), the state sold some "214 different agricultural products," whereas other states tended to "produce from 12 to 15 crops." He reported that "approximately 118 different and distinct types of farming can be found in California by comparison with 8 types to be found in Illinois, 20 in Texas, and 25 in Pennsylvania." By 1997, California was commercially producing more than 250 crops and was the leading producer of 76. McWilliams, *California*, 104; Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 51; Martin, *Promise Unfulfilled*, 17.

processes." Or, as geographer James Parsons says, the San Joaquin Valley, and by extension the whole of the agricultural landscape of the state, is marked by "a lavishness of scale and an extraordinary diversity of crops" unparalleled anywhere else in the United States and perhaps the world.[19]

However, as Richard Walker correctly argues, the great diversity of crops and the staggering productivity of the California countryside cannot be attributed to the environment alone, "as if the land had determined what should be done with it." While the environment, the physical landscape, provides a base, Walker argues, the true cause of diversity—as well as of the single-crop districts—lies in a complex history of horticultural experimentation, and especially in the "prime logic of capitalism: the multiplication of commodities" that means "new sources of value for the producer." It also lies in the decisions of the bankers who regulate the location and planting of crops in an effort to control economic risk as capital circulates through the environment—as well as through the hands of growers and workers—as George Henderson has so compellingly shown. And, of course, it is the result of the ongoing struggle to procure labor power of the right quantity and the right quality, appearing at the right place at the right time and at the right price, possessed of the right level of fealty to its purchaser. Indeed, this last factor—labor power—is the lynchpin of the whole process, and because of that, the struggles over the bracero program were unyieldingly intense. "Reality soon caught up with us," Octavio Rivas Guillen wrote not long after he arrived in California. And so it did. But the struggles over that reality—the reality of laboring as essentially indentured workers in an intensely modern, intensely capitalist landscape—in turn shaped a new reality, a landscape in which, as we are about to see, workers like Rivas, imported as an emergency and supplementary labor force, became the dominant labor force (if not in numbers then in importance to the functioning of the system), the labor force upon which agricultural production in California was capitalized. It thus became the *essential* labor force at midcentury.[20]

But—and this is crucial—it did not necessarily have to be that way.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Agribusiness Landscape in the "War Emergency"

The Origins of the Bracero Program and the Struggle to Control It

We are asking for labor only at certain times of the year—at the peak of our harvest—and the class of labor we want is the kind we can send home when we get through with them.

G. W. Guiberson, Agricultural Labor Bureau of the San Joaquin Valley, *Hearings* of the LaFollette Committee, 1939

In an earlier letter I commented on the fact that in California, at least, the successful harvest of the crops was more the consequence of fortuitous circumstances than of governmental or private programs. I pointed out that at greatly expanded costs both state and federal agencies had continued traditional labor programs without materially increasing their magnitude nor effectiveness. The superficial reaction will be inevitably that the old programs with the newer window dressing have somehow risen to the emergency and accomplished the task of solving, momentarily at least, the farm labor supply problem. Actually, of course, the emergency did not exist and it may be one of the major agricultural tragedies of the post-war world, that an emergency did not develop since the exposure of the bankruptcy of current patterns was thus avoided.

Edward J. Rowell, Regional Labor Specialist, to N. Gregory Silvermaster, Chief, Labor Division, Farm Security Administration, January 24, 1944

BY THE END OF THE 1930S, according to Carey McWilliams, the great critic of twentieth-century California, California agriculture had been thoroughly shaped as an industrial and capitalist landscape. Now, as war was gathering in Europe and the Pacific, perhaps it was on the cusp of being transformed into a rational and maybe even a just one. Forged in the fires of class and race violence, "farms have become factories in California," marked by "typically capitalistic patterns of industrial operation." The "pattern [was] cut," as McWilliams put it, in the well-known transformation of California agriculture from an extensive, booming (and already quite capitalist) "bonanza" wheat frontier, where by the end of the 1860s, "farming became a large-scale industry" with farms measured in the tens of thousands of acres, to a much more intensive, and even more thoroughly capitalist agriculture based in a wide diversity of fruits and vegetables by the 1890s.* There were "several important consequences" of this transition, including increased capitalization of farms (especially because of a heavier reliance on irrigation), a decrease in average farm size (though not necessarily the power of large landowners), and, especially, an increased demand for temporary and seasonal labor, labor cheap enough to offset the advantages of mechanized wheat farming, the increasing capitalization attendant upon intensification, and the high transportation costs to distant markets.† This demand, in turn, was the crucible for the fires of race and class violence that forged the California landscape, and much of McWilliams's incisive 1939 exposé, *Factories in the Field*, was given over to tracing the intensity of these fires, and showing how the "surface placidity about the great inland farm valleys of California . . . is as deceptive as the legends in the books," even though "no one who has visited a rural county in California" during a strike or a growers' vigilante movement "will deny the reality of the terror that exists."[1]

The reality of the terror that exists had shaped the landscape, but now, thought McWilliams, it had to be transformed. The rise of intensive capitalist

* Richard Walker is correct to suggest that "there is no evidence . . . that California experienced a once-and-for-all shift from 'extensive' to 'intensive' farming" after the 1880s: the landscape is far more complex than that. But it is true that the nature of farming did shift, that the huge wheat farms were broken up, and that there was an overall intensification of farming. Importantly, the political center of gravity in farming shifted from the wheat miners to the powerful vegetable and citrus "grower-shippers." The transformation was more than the "great mirage" that Walker calls it. *Conquest of Bread*, 57. Some of those weighing in on the debate are cited in note 1.

† As we will see later, flexibility of labor supplies, together with predictability within the labor pool, was as important to intensive factory farming in California as was cheapness, though we will also see that each was a function of the other.

farming in the state had brought with it, by the late 1930s, an impressive collectivization of farmers' power. A long history of *intraclass* struggle had led on the one hand to massive, vertically integrated agricultural corporations, like Cal-Pak (Del Monte), Garin, DiGiorgio (S&W Brands, Tree Sweet), O'Dwyer and Mets, and Schenley Industries, that farmed up and down the state (often on leased land or through subcontracting to smaller farmers), ran packing houses (that frequently had monopsonistic control in particular crop regions), owned shipping companies, and operated fruit exchanges in the East. On the other hand, an unprecedented degree of horizontal integration had been achieved through the (not infrequently coercive) formation of cooperatives like the California Fruit Growers Exchange (Sunkist), the California Walnut Growers Association (Diamond), the Sun-Maid Raisin Growers Association, the Western Growers Protective Association, and the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association; the creation of grower-controlled labor associations (essentially pools for sharing labor, such as the Agricultural Labor Bureau of the San Joaquin Valley); and the development of organizations for flexing political muscle, such as the California Farm Bureau Federation and the Associated Farmers of California, Inc.* By sharing labor, growers could better count on an adequate and flexible supply, available when needed; by combining in cooperatives, growers could "reduce competition, keep prices up, and maintain a common front vis-à-vis markets."[2]

In other words, through these corporate structures, California growers amassed the power to significantly control the conditions of agricultural production in the state—and they did. Through them, perhaps especially through the labor associations, capitalist farmers developed a "long record of [class] unity across differences in pursuit of common goals," as Richard Walker put it. While often irrational in its actions—California agriculture is irrational, that is, unplanned, McWilliams wrote—agribusiness was nonetheless already significantly collectivized and already established on modernist principles that were quite subject to rationalization and planning. All that was necessary, McWilliams thought, was an organization of workers commensurate with that of growers, along with a strong-handed state ready to change "the anachronistic system of ownership" that controlled "the great farm valleys of California" so that they could finally "come into their own." With such (self-)organization of workers and change in ownership, McWilliams suggested, the transformation

* By 1936, Sunkist marketed 75 percent of California's citrus crop and racked up sales of $107 million. DiGiorgio was the world's largest shipper of fresh fruit during the 1930s, and by 1947 had annual revenues topping $18 million.

of the California farming landscape into something rational and just might very well be accomplished.[3]

On average, California farms were not the largest in the United States. In 1940, the average farm size in California was 202.4 acres. In the intermountain states, by contrast, it exceeded 1,000 acres (and in the case of Wyoming reached nearly 2,000 acres); in the Dakotas it exceeded 500 acres and in Kansas 300 acres. But these were extensive farming regions dominated by massive cattle ranches and the sort of large-scale wheat farming that had marked California during the bonanza years of the 1860s. California farming was by this time highly intensive (even if cattle, calf, and dairy operations, along with hay, alfalfa, and grain production remained quite important to the agricultural economy). As a 1951 study put it (based on data from the 1940s), "farming in the State generally and in the San Joaquin Valley in particular is characterized by high investments per farm unit and by high annual cost of operation, as compared with corresponding costs for agriculture in the United States as a whole." The average value of farm implements and machinery on California farms in 1945 was more than double that of the nation; in the San Joaquin Valley it was even greater: almost 2.4 times the national average. Operating costs—including wages—were also higher than those in the nation as a whole. These characteristics expressed themselves in the value of California farmland. In 1935, the value-per-acre of California farmland was 189 percent of the U.S. average ($76.4/acre versus $40.5/acre, respectively). While this percentage dropped in 1940 (to 169% of U.S. average), it thereafter steadily increased, rising to 242 percent of the national average by the end of the bracero era ($468.4/acre versus $193.9/acre) (figure 1.1). In other words, farming in California was an expensive business, but it was a business that, on the whole, paid (figure 1.2).[4]

And it produced. Productivity per acre in California outstripped the U.S. average in most crops in 1940, and maintained (in some cases increased) that productivity lead through 1960 (figure 1.3). There are many reasons for this high level of productivity, including the application of revolutionary new pesticides and fertilizers, the effects of years of horticultural experimentation, the use of scientific management techniques, the completion of massive federal and state projects that made new and highly subsidized sources of water available for irrigation, the development of vertical and horizontal integration as already discussed, and, of course, "cheap labor."[5]

These levels of productivity, this intensity, could be maintained, McWilliams suggested, in the absence of cheap labor, and there were early intimations, as the 1930s drew to a close, that it just might be. There was, in the first place, a growing "trend toward stabilization" of the harvest labor force. Racialized workers—

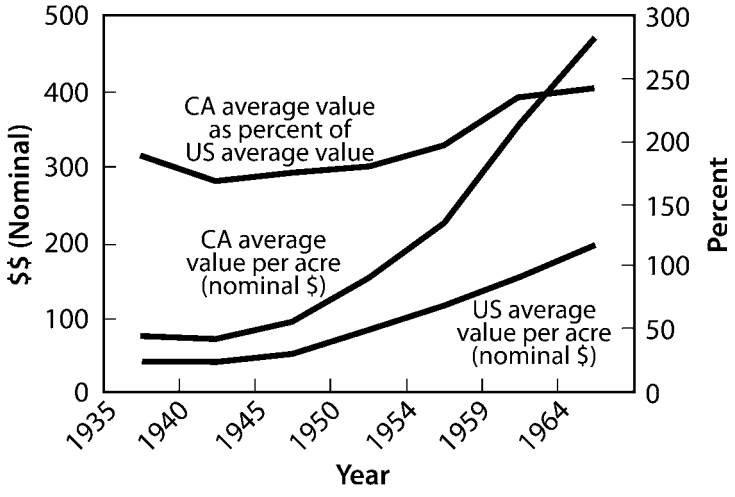


FIGURE 1.1. Farm Value per Acre, United States and California. Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture.

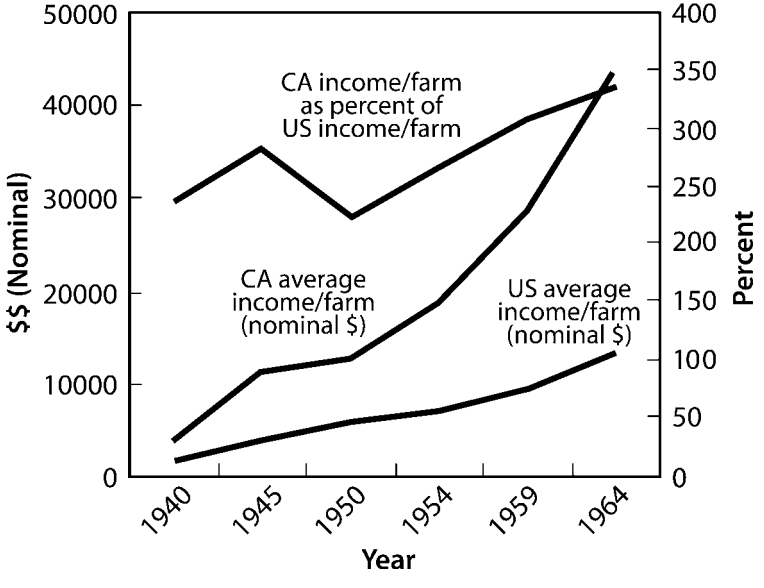


FIGURE 1.2. Average Farm Income, United States and California. Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture.

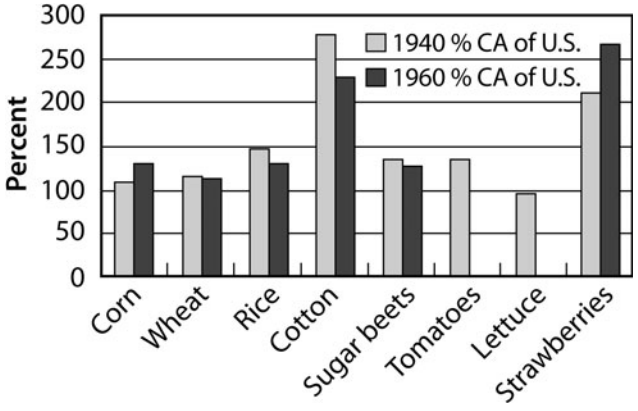


FIGURE 1.3. California Productivity per Acre as a Percentage of U.S. Productivity per Acre (Selected Crops). Source: Walker, Conquest of Bread, 145–46.

the historic labor force of Chinese, Japanese, "Hindu,"* Filipino, Mexican, and to some degree black workers—were being replaced in the 1930s by a mass migration of white (and some black) workers from the Dust Bowl states. With this influx, McWilliams argued, "it is now theoretically possible to solve the farm-labor problem in California"—the problem of how to assure an adequate number of workers in the right place at the right time. In part this was because the "race problem has, in effect, been eliminated," by which McWilliams meant that growers could no longer excuse the appalling pay and labor and living conditions with racist arguments about the racial fitness of certain groups to do stoop labor or their ability to appreciate an "American" standard of living. Second, "growers themselves, through their various labor exchanges and pools, have demonstrated that the demand for farm labor can be estimated with sufficient accuracy for purposes of regulating the supply." Finally, transformations in the landscape itself had opened up new opportunities for stabilization. If labor supply was better regulated, the range of new crops that had become commercially viable in the past generation now made it possible, according to McWilliams, to extend the period of employment almost throughout the year—to dampen down the large difference between peak and trough demand. And, significantly, the creation of federally run migratory labor camps (like those about to be made famous in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*) had shown

* "Hindu" (or "Hindoo") was a catchall term in early to mid-twentieth-century California for any person from the subcontinent; in fact, many, probably a majority of those who came to California around the turn of the twentieth century, were Sikhs.

that decent housing led to a "measure of stabilization . . . or at least [shown] that large groups of workers can be stabilized within a definite area." The *irrational* mobility of workers could be eliminated.[6]

Things were already in place. The collective organization of workers, McWilliams argued, would lead to worker-determined "solutions for their most immediate problems" through the creation of hiring halls and cooperative camps, the transformation of the federal labor camps into subsistence homesteads, and so forth. And the usurpation of the grower class—abolishing "the present wasteful, vicious, undemocratic and thoroughly antisocial system of agricultural ownership"—involved "at most merely a change in ownership. The collective principle is there; large units of operation have been established, only they are being exploited by private interests for their own ends." Change the conditions of labor, change the structure of ownership, and a whole new world was possible. All that value, all that wealth that had been built up in the fields and orchards of the state, all that *social* value that was "served" by migratory labor (as Harry Drobish put it) but which circulated almost entirely into the hands of the growers, could become social again, and a "new rural social order" could arise in the state.[7]

Not surprisingly, for his dreams, but also for his actions as the chief of the California Division of Immigration and Housing (DIH, to which he had been appointed in January 1939, a few months ahead of the publication of *Factories in the Field*, by "Little New Deal" Governor Culbert Olson),* Carey McWilliams was labeled "Agricultural Pest No. 1" by the Associated Farmers, the famously antiunion organization that developed in the 1930s to promote the interests of farmers and the efficacy of vigilantism. As head of DIH, McWilliams spearheaded reasonably effective reforms, increasing the number of camp inspectors, assisting the federal FSA migratory labor camp program, and generally supporting workers' efforts to "settle out" of migratory work, to unionize, to take fuller control over the conditions of their lives. For his troubles, new Governor Earl Warren made a show of quickly "firing" McWilliams as one of his first acts upon taking office in January 1943—much to the delight of farm interests around the state.†[8]

* With its roots in the Progressive-era California Commission of Immigration and Housing (CCIH), DIH was the primary reformist state agency operating in the California fields. It was charged with inspecting farm labor camps, enforcing the Labor Camp Act, and generally trying to assure decent working and living conditions for farm workers.

† As McWilliams himself points out, this was all ceremony; as an appointed official his term expired when the new governor assumed office (*Factories in the Field*, xii–xiii). A sense of how the Warren administration understood McWilliams—and the degree of satisfaction growers took in his departure—is clear in the letters in Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2291.

As fantastic as it might sound now, much can be learned from focusing on the dream of a rational agricultural system that McWilliams laid out at the end of *Factories in the Field*. The crisis of the 1930s, together with the general trajectory of capital intensification and corporate organization that marked the California agricultural landscape in the first four decades of the twentieth century, suggested not only to McWilliams, but to many others, that there was now the opportunity for the wholesale reformation, maybe even a revolution, of the agribusiness landscape. This sense was shared, if in a very different register, by many growers too, who themselves were weathering a period of rapid restructuring. The field was open, perhaps; the question was not so much whether California agriculture was going to go on changing, but the direction of that change, and who would win and lose in the process. What kind of new social order was in the making? And who might benefit from it? These questions were vital ones for understanding the early years of the bracero program and the landscape that was produced out of it.

The Clamor for Labor and the Origins of the Bracero Program

As the level of income possible from farming in California attested (see figure 1.2), there was much at stake at the end of the 1930s as the United States struggled to emerge from a decade of depression, crisis, and social upheaval. Already by 1939, war preparations, not only abroad, but in the United States too, were beginning to spur economic growth. For many farmers across the United States the growing war economy portended labor shortages, or more accurately, a shrinking of the large surplus to which they had grown accustomed. By the summer of 1940, cotton growers in Texas, together with the Texas legislature and the state federation of labor, complained of workers leaving the state for higher-paid work in the beet fields to the north. They petitioned the federal government, not for assistance in rationalizing labor relations as McWilliams would have advocated, but to enforce the emigrant agent law—post–Civil War legislation designed to make it difficult, if not impossible, for agents to recruit freed blacks for work in other states, in essence, increasing the cost of labor mobility for African Americans and creating a localized, stagnant labor pool, a local reserve army of labor. This was unavailing, and in 1941 growers prevailed upon the Texas congressional delegation to lobby for a program of labor importation from Mexico. About the same time, Arizona cotton growers joined the appeal for Mexican workers. California farmers added their voice in September 1941, asking permission to recruit thirty thousand workers for the coming harvest.[9]

The request was refused. But the attack on Pearl Harbor changed matters. Reports of labor shortages in numerous sectors of the economy became widespread. While these reports were inconsistent, the most striking and salient fact for wartime labor supplies was the unevenness—the irrationality—of labor supply. While the American Farm Bureau Federation and other farmer organizations claimed that more than 1.5 million workers had left agriculture in the first weeks of the war—surely an exaggeration—and while it was true that localized shortages of workers were beginning to develop in, for example, dairying, there were also numerous reports of farm labor surpluses, especially in California. Governor Olson, for example, opposed the 1941 importation of Mexican workers, noting that a Department of Employment survey revealed "an ample supply of the labor of the type sought" in the growers' request. And in April 1942, the National Conference of Catholic Charities testified before the Senate that FSA camps in California had a 40–50 percent unemployment rate and that many of those employed were only working a few days a week.* While some of this unemployment could no doubt be attributed to the fact that spring is the period of lowest labor demand in California agriculture, the FSA reported that in-migration to California was continuing at a high rate, that 68,000 people in the state remained on county relief, that Works Progress Administration (WPA) make-work programs were still employing 64,000, that there were large pools of available un- and underemployed Mexican Americans in the state, that there was a surplus of at least 6,000 agricultural workers in current active-crop areas, and that, overall, there was no general labor shortage in the state.† The FSA was concerned, however, that labor was being used inefficiently, that much available labor was in the wrong place, and that it couldn't move because of "the tire situation"—the rationing of rubber (as well as gas) was making it nearly impossible for low-paid workers to move "from their home localities" to seek agricultural work. In addition, the Alien Registration Act required resident alien Mexicans to "report each change of address . . . or be liable for penalties," a factor that

* At the same time, the War Manpower Commission found that across the country "more than 2,000,000 farm operators had not been effectively employed, in addition to other persons who had been available for work as farm hands, at the peak of the season," but most of these operators and workers were on subsistence farms in the Ozarks, Appalachians, and Upper Midwest, not in regions of large, industrialized harvests like Texas or California. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 21–22.

† The number of migrants entering California from other states in search of work peaked in 1937 at 90,761; in 1940, only 59,837 entered the state. But 1941, even before Pearl Harbor, saw a sharp uptick: 86,059, second only to the 1937 peak. Mills to McWilliams, January 7, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 1.

the FSA thought did not prevent movement entirely, but was still a strong force toward immobility.[10]

Nonetheless, pressure from growers, especially in California, for the importation of Mexican workers was increasing. Based on a survey conducted in March 1942, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics (BAE) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) predicted growing labor shortages in the western sugar beet districts. California Field Crops, Inc. quickly asked the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for permission to import four thousand workers from Mexico to work in the California beet fields. As a result, INS formed an interagency committee on farm labor, focusing particularly on sugar beets, and charged it with determining the conditions under which Mexican Nationals would be recruited, if necessary.[11]

Some in the federal government did not think it was necessary. Davis McEntire, the leader of the Division of Population and Rural Welfare in the BAE, argued that in the first place, while farm wages had begun to rise over the previous year, "they are still at levels which compete unfavorably with wages for alternative employment for potential and other farm workers." Second, California beet farmers used inefficient cultivation and harvesting techniques, including requiring workers to use the back-breaking short-handled hoe when beet growers in Europe and elsewhere in the United States had long since abandoned it. Some fairly minor adjustments in the labor process, together with a shift to a different cultivar that was easier to block and thin, would increase yields, decrease labor demands, eliminate the short-handled hoe, and spread out the season so that fewer workers could work longer seasons. McEntire argued that growers had three choices if they were unwilling to make alterations in production techniques: (1) they could increase wages to attract the domestic Mexican and Filipino workers they thought especially suited to work in the beet fields; (2) they could recruit "workers other than Mexicans and Filipinos"; or (3) they could do the "easiest and cheapest thing" which would require "no alterations in either wage structure or labor structure"—import Mexican National workers.* McEntire argued there was a long history of racist ideas about who could "suitably" do stoop labor, making the use of workers other than Mexican, Filipino, and the now-incarcerated Japanese men unthinkable. "That these contentions are patently absurd," he wrote, "in no way diminishes the force with which they are held." McEntire stressed that the ability of Mexican, Filipino, and Japanese

* McEntire noted that one of the problems with recruiting non-Mexican and Filipino labor in California (with their incarceration, Japanese workers were not a factor) was the lack of suitable housing for family workers—a theme that would arise again and again over the course of the bracero program.

workers to do stoop labor was a function of individuals having "long experience" and a great deal of skill; the racist argument denied this, which, for McEntire, confirmed the irrationality of the beet growers' request for Mexican National workers. "All that is required [by the growers] is that they be Mexicans. The issue is basically one of race." What the growers would get with an importation program, McEntire noted, was unskilled workers; the hope, clearly, was to substitute quantity (a large number of unskilled, very low-paid workers) for quality (fewer skilled workers who would have to be better paid, and who would have demanded some control over the conditions of their labor). McEntire argued there could be no objections to the importation of labor if need truly existed, but "the objections arise from the ease with which labor importation may be used to evade what might be considered the reasonable obligations of employers to pay fair wages, provide decent housing, and working conditions, and to use the labor force efficiently and without waste."[12]

McEntire and many others in the BAE, FSA, and other agencies argued strenuously for more efficient use of available labor, for programs to move domestic workers from areas of oversupply such as the Ozarks and Appalachians to areas of need, and for support for new production techniques that would increase yield without necessarily increasing labor demand (e.g., mechanized planting and harvesting). But there was a political reality to be faced—the deafening cry of "labor shortage." "At present the cry has become a roar," McEntire wrote:

> The fear of labor shortage approaches panic and it may have serious repercussions on production, quite regardless of whether it is justified or not. The first objective of agricultural policy during the war is to increase production. If panic and fear of labor shortage threatens to defeat this objective, as seems likely in the present instance, then it becomes necessary to take steps to allay the fear, even though it may have no foundation in fact. . . . No amount of statistical evidence (even if we had it), and no amount of urging of economies in labor use and mobilization of community resources will suffice to allay the present panic. The farmers are likely to be reassured by nothing less than a promise to restore their accustomed labor pool.

The only question, then, was how to assure imported (and domestic) labor was free from the "bad conditions—the bad housing, the violation of civil liberties, the misery and degradation of the working force which has been characteristic of California agriculture." A plan was required that would guarantee that "Mexicans should be brought in only as needed, not in great numbers, and with iron-clad guarantees as to wages, employment, living conditions, civil treatment, and eventual repatriation."[13]

A similar line of reasoning led organized labor to support the INS's interagency working group that was then developing plans to import Mexican National workers. By May 1942, labor leaders, fearful of being seen as obstructions to "food for victory" plans, agreed to a program of limited labor importation as long as there were guarantees protecting the both imported and domestic workers from exploitation and that Mexican National workers were returned to Mexico at the end of each harvest.* Such demands helped assure that growers would not entirely get their way. Growers wanted to be able to directly recruit Mexican Nationals, with government subsidy and perhaps government support for housing, but without any "interference" from either the U.S. or Mexican government. On May 22, the War Manpower Commission approved a plan that took into account the demands of the Mexican government, labor, farmers, and others. Under this plan, the U.S. Employment Service (USES) would have to certify there was a labor shortage and that no domestic workers were available.† Imported workers had to be guaranteed prevailing wages, and could not be used to bring wages down. Growers would be allowed to recruit workers directly, but under rules made by the Mexican government. Growers would have to pay transportation to and from Mexico, provide contracts in both English and Spanish, post a performance bond, make "reasonable" provisions for full employment, and guarantee at least thirty cents an hour for the duration of the contract (even when work was lacking). USDA would determine housing standards and develop a medical insurance program. The Department of Labor would handle the complaints of imported workers, except those working in beets, whose complaints would be handled by the Department of Agriculture. Finally, through the INS, the Department of Justice would enforce immigration laws and assure the return of workers to Mexico at the end of each season. This

* Opposition from various unions had heretofore been strong and vocal. Unions worried that there would be considerable "seepage" into other industries of Mexican workers brought in to work on the railroads and in agriculture. See the letters collected in Taylor Papers, Carton 39, File 13. Mexican Americans likewise opposed the program, both because of probable exploitation of imported workers and because noncitizen domestic workers were barred from defense industries and thus "forced to remain in the fields"; Mexican National workers would be direct competitors for jobs. Scruggs, "Evolution of the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement," 142; see also Garcia, *World of Its Own*, 174–75.

† Indications of the way this certification practice would actually be used were already apparent. On May 3, 1942, USES reported that there was enough domestic labor to meet all agricultural needs in the West; on May 17, it noted that beet growers were not successfully recruiting enough domestic workers; it nonetheless certified a need for 3,000 imported Mexican workers for California, and 1,500 each for Montana and Idaho. Scruggs, "Evolution of the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement," 145.

plan was, in fact, quite similar to the one finally agreed upon by the governments of Mexico and the United States later that summer.[14]

In the meantime, Carey McWilliams sought to use his position as chief of DIH to influence the debate—and the structure of the wartime labor market—by making public an extensive analysis and set of recommendations dated June 11, 1942. Like the labor leaders in Washington, and like McEntire, McWilliams assumed the pressure for a Mexican importation program, together with the mounting fear of labor shortages, would be hard, probably impossible, to deflate.* But, he argued, "the importation of Mexican labor has proceeded upon the assumption that there were no available alternatives." McWilliams sought to show that "there are other available alternatives which, perhaps, in the long run would do more toward meeting the requirements of the present emergency than would the importation of Mexican labor."[15]

McWilliams recommended the establishment of a national Farm Labor Authority (FLA) charged with the recruitment and deployment of workers "to meet critical needs in connection with particular crops in particular areas."† The FLA would provide transportation for domestic workers; workman's compensation insurance and social security benefits; labor camps in the fields, in the supply centers, and in transit; and both emergency medical health care and public health services for recruited workers. To assure success in recruiting the necessary quantity and quality of workers, the FLA would guarantee wages for a definite and significant period of time (e.g., six months); pay a bonus to those who did good work and remained for the duration of their contract; assure wages were at least equal to prevailing wages in a crop and area; arrange temporary draft deferments for farm workers; and assure all these services were free to recruited workers. The FLA would only work with organized growers, not individual farmers, and would impose the following requirements: growers

* Indeed, Governor Olson, working at the behest of the head of the state Department of Agriculture, and following estimates from the grower-friendly R. L. Adams of the University of California (not from his own DIH), reversed his stance of a year before that there was an abundance of labor in the state. Now, in a wire to the director of the War Manpower Commission and the secretaries of labor, agriculture, and state, Olson begged for "a substantial number of Mexicans," without which "the situation is certain to be disastrous to the entire victory program." Like others, he specifically argued that better wages for domestic workers had to be provided; unlike the interagency commission, he argued that the expense of transporting workers and administering the program should be borne by the USES rather than growers. "Mexican Workers Sought by Olson," *New York Times*, June 16, 1942, 18; see Craig, *Bracero Program*, 39.

† McWilliams noted that labor procurement agencies had been established for other critical war industries; the lack of such an agency in agriculture put it at a significant disadvantage.

would guarantee employment for a set number of workers for a set period of time; growers would pay the FLA a per capita fee to offset the cost of transportation, housing, and the like. The FLA would be a supplementary agency, "utilized solely to prevent actual loss of *important wartime crops* through the shortage of farm labor"; it would supplement, not supplant, the local labor supply and be used primarily to meet peak labor demands. The advantages of such an FLA were obvious to McWilliams. It would "shift workers quickly and efficiently from area to area . . . [and] successfully 'un-freeze' the present immobility of farm labor"; assure the farm labor force was used in a "scientific manner" while also assuring continual employment for workers, something growers "or even groups of growers" seemed unable to do on their own; work as a form of employment insurance when actual labor demands were uneven; perform necessary functions of the private labor contract system that had arisen to match supply to demand, but without "the abuses which were inherent and still are inherent in that system"; assure a flexible labor force of the right size for demand "since growers would be careful not to overestimate their needs since they would be held responsible for the per capita fee charged by the Authority"; and provide "centralized control and direction" and thus "go a long way toward rationalizing the existing chaos in the field of labor employment."[16]

Short of the collectivized farming called for in *Factories in the Field*, then, McWilliams's FLA would nonetheless be a significant step toward the remaking of the California farming landscape—a step toward not only meeting the wartime emergency, but also assuring the "great farming valleys of California" really would "come into their own." In fact, by the end of the summer, the USDA had set up something like the program advocated. But the USDA program would always be subservient to the Mexican importation program then being negotiated in Mexico City, and (as we will see) was all but eliminated within a year.[17]

In *Factories in the Field*, McWilliams argued that what "the growers want . . . [is] the impossible: stabilization without its consequences; a regular labor supply without responsibility for its maintenance; privately controlled camps operated at public expense." They also wanted to import Mexican workers when and however they desired. In June 1942, Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard, working with representatives of the State Department, opened negotiations with Mexico over the importation of Mexican National workers. Leery of whether a labor shortage really existed in the United States, and mindful of the past history of hyperexploitation of Mexican workers during earlier "war emergencies," Mexico demanded significant guarantees on behalf of its workers, including wage guarantees, return transportation, and the guarantees of-

fered emigrant workers under Article 29 of the Mexican Constitution.* At first Mexico also demanded to be the recruiter of workers, but the Mexican Constitution forbade the Mexican state from recruiting workers for employment in other countries, a fact that U.S. Ambassador to Mexico George Messersmith reported with some glee. Given Mexican insistence that neither U.S. growers nor representatives of the individual states be allowed to directly recruit workers in Mexico, the task was assigned to the FSA, which would work closely with Mexican officials. A preliminary agreement on Mexican labor was thus reached on July 22, 1942, and finalized through an exchange of diplomatic notes on August 4.[18]

The agreement stipulated that before any braceros were contracted the USES had to certify there was a labor shortage and that all avenues for recruiting domestic workers had been exhausted. Once need was established, the FSA would work with the Mexican government to recruit and select workers and subject them to medical examinations. Under the agreement, the FSA would be the employer of record; individual braceros would sign contracts with the FSA, which would then subcontract to growers, who were required to post a performance bond, which was forfeited if they failed to uphold provisions of the contract. Growers also paid five dollars toward the cost of transporting each worker from Mexico City to the place of employment. Housing and sanitary conditions were to be "identical" to those provided domestic workers—a meaningless provision given the shoddy conditions most domestic workers had to put up with.†

* As Gilbert Gonzalez reminds us, any discussion of bilateral agreements between Mexico and the United States need to be understood in the context of the *imperial* relation that defined the two countries. They must be understood in the context of "economic domination by the United States since the late nineteenth century, a domination tantamount to colonization." Neither is it sufficient, on the U.S. side, to explain the actions of the American state as the result of some sort of pluralistic "inter-group" politics, as does Richard Craig. As will be obvious in all that follows, not all those who seek to bend the state to their will are created equal. Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 16; Craig, *Bracero Program*.

† Since its inception as the Commission of Immigration and Housing in 1913, DIH/DoH found the number of "good" labor camps in California—that is, camps that merely met all provisions of the Labor Camp Act—consistently hovered around one-third and almost never exceeded 40 percent, even upon reinspection after repairs were demanded. See, for example, Monthly Labor Camp Reports, January 1940 to August 1950, Division of Immigration and Housing Records, File 59. Scruggs ("Evolution of the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement," 148) broadens the point, arguing that many of the provisions of the agreement were a sham: Mexican workers were promised various protections—sanitary conditions, health care, housing, and so on—on an "identical" basis with domestic workers, but since "99 percent of American farm workers did not enjoy" such protections, they were "in effect denied . . . to Mexican labor."

Imported workers would be guaranteed work at least 75 percent of the time (exclusive of Sundays), and provided a three dollar per day subsistence when there was a shortfall; wages were to be paid on "the same basis" and at the same rate as those of domestic workers. Growers were to provide food at the cost to workers of $1.50 per day, but braceros could elect to keep that sum and provide for themselves or eat in town. Ten percent of wages were to be withheld from the workers and deposited in Mexico to be paid upon the workers' return. Finally, workers could elect their own representatives, but they could not strike; neither could they be locked out. Indeed, at least on the side of the workers, the terms of the contract "were non-negotiable."[19]

As soon as word of the program leaked out in Mexico, "the flow of *aspirantes* in and to Mexico City was immediate and multitudinous." Within a week thousands of potential braceros descended on the Secretariat of Labor in Mexico City, many of them highly qualified and skilled workers, rather than *campesinos*. Processing of applicants was quickly moved to the National Stadium. Crowds sometimes grew so large and unruly that firefighters were ordered to disperse them with hoses. Those—like Octavio Rivas Guillen—who made it into the stadium were registered, interviewed by representatives of the Mexican government and various Americans,* given health examinations by Mexican and American officers, including lung X-rays (and, often, a spraying with DDT or other insecticides for lice), posed for identification photographs, and placed into groups of twenty-five or thirty to have the contract read and explained to them. The FSA claimed that each "applicant had to spend from 5 to 7 hours before a battery of more than sixty examining officials." These officials included representatives of California Field Crops, who would be receiving the first batch of braceros, and who were happy to accept workers with no experience in agriculture just so long as they possessed "superior physical fitness." Simultaneously, field offices were established in Stockton, Sacramento, Chico, and Santa Maria to "handle reception of workers for sugar beets and to do payroll audit and labor relations work."[20]

The USDA simultaneously started a parallel program of domestic labor trans-

* Besides Laurence Hewes, the FSA administrator put in charge of the importation program, and various representatives of the State and Labor departments already in Mexico, the United States sent a delegation of twenty Americans, including representatives of growers, the USES, and "a number of transportation agents, contract agents and clerks from the Farm Security Administration" to Mexico City on September 12. A delegation of public health officials arrived separately. Armstrong to Walker, September 23, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 1.

portation, also overseen by the FSA, though it was not quite as comprehensive as Carey McWilliams's proposed FLA.* The secretary of agriculture made the reasons for this domestic program clear: "In all the discussion regarding Mexican labor it has been taken for granted that we would make use of all available manpower in our own country first and that if the Government were to provide transportation for Mexican workers it should be willing to do as much for our own people. . . . Following the same reasoning where the Government provides transportation for domestic workers it must give to domestic workers the same assurances as to wages and employment as we are offering to Mexicans."[21]

The goal of the domestic program, "developed under directives issued by the War Manpower Commission," was to move "farm workers into areas where serious shortages exist." For growers to have access to transported workers, they had to guarantee payment of prevailing wages as determined in public hearings held by wage boards consisting of representatives of the War Manpower Commission and the USDA (a minimum wage of thirty cents an hour was also mandated); guarantee work at least 75 percent of the time; provide "adequate housing, health, and sanitary provisions" as determined by the FSA (national minimums were established, but the FSA was empowered to allow local variations in quality); and assure that no minors were employed "except as permitted by Federal and State laws and policies." The FSA would pay roundtrip transportation costs to assembly centers (less a five-dollar-per-capita charge to growers), and would not transport workers in groups fewer than one hundred or distances less than two hundred miles; it thus expected to work primarily with growers associations rather than individual growers. Growers would be responsible for transportation from the assembly centers to their own farms. Workers living in grower camps could not be required to shop at company stores or eat in company messes (and, in a big departure from standard practice, rent charges were to be contractual and therefore negotiated in advance). As with the Mexican program, growers had to post a performance bond and worker performance was guaranteed by a threat of forfeiture of return transportation.[22]

In other words, the FSA, through both the Mexican importation program and the domestic transportation program, was proposing to provide heavily subsidized, flexible yet controlled, prevetted labor to those areas where growers feared increasing labor shortages. It sought, in this way, to address what one

* FSA was authorized to develop this program in June 1942, but did not begin to implement it until after the importation program had been agreed upon. Scruggs, "Bracero Program," esp. 153.

FSA official, N. Gregory Silvermaster, called "the lack of sense and system in the farm labor market."* Octavio Rivas Guillen and his fellow workers who arrived in Stockton on September 29, 1942, were the first evidence, the FSA hoped, that concerted and coordinated international farm labor importation and domestic labor transportation programs might implant "sense and system" in the fields of California (and other industrial farming states). While they might have been developed to assuage a growing panic about a labor shortage, and while it was clear they might very well be used merely to shore up an already irrational system (as McEntire argued), they might also become a first step in remaking the reality that was the agribusiness landscape.[23]

Labor Importation as Threat

The FSA programs—in part because of the threat that they might remake the reality of the California farming landscape—were not really what most growers wanted. They preferred direct access to as many Mexican workers as possible, and if they could not recruit them directly, then they wanted "a horde of Mexican workers [to be] brought in by the government" with no strings attached. Though growers' representatives were involved in the negotiations in Mexico City right from the beginning, growers in California and the West raised objections to the program early, loudly, and incessantly. Less than a week after the first braceros arrived in California—those early workers feted with bands and banquets—the *Pacific Rural Press* chastised growers for accepting "a yoke pre-

* Since I rely on his analysis more than once, it should be noted that Silvermaster was a Soviet spy. Identified by Elizabeth Bentley and in the decoded Venona cables, he is often referred to as a leader of a spy ring focused on the Treasury Department; he lent his name to the "Silvermaster file," some 26,000 pages of FBI investigative material. Silvermaster's position on the War Production Board allowed him to ship to Soviet intelligence considerable secret information on war production. Even those skeptical of much of the paranoia surrounding World War II and Cold War espionage and the "Communist menace" in the United States refer to Silvermaster as "an energetic clandestine agent" (Guttenplan, "Red Harvest," 30). The Silvermaster case provides some evidence that California farmers were not totally off base when they claimed, as they often did, the FSA was a nest of Communists. His report to the FSA staff conference I rely on here, however, speaks what was pretty much the common sense of those within the FSA and other programs connected to the importation of labor. It certainly does little more than preview what has come to be taken for granted by scholars of California farm labor about its "lack of sense and system"; see, esp., Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*. Before moving into the federal government (first in the Federal Resettlement Administration, then the FSA), Silvermaster worked in the California State Emergency Relief Administration, helping to establish the first migratory labor camps. "Nathan Silvermaster, Economist Once Accused as Spy, Dies at 65," *New York Times*, October 15, 1964, 39.

pared by the Farm Security Administration" when they agreed to the conditions outlined in the agreement with Mexico. Ten days later, the Casa Farm Bureau Federation in Arizona complained that the FSA had inserted "socialistic" provisions into the international agreement governing the labor importation program, and called for a return to the unconstrained recruiting of workers from Mexico that had been the hallmark of the previous war.[24]

Growers in California not infrequently refused to sign contracts with FSA, fearing that cooperation with program administrators would lead to a government-run labor distribution system, which in turn would eventually extend protective standards to domestic workers as well (as the incipient domestic transportation program was already trying to do). Farm Bureau Federation–organized growers in California and Arizona testified at special Senate hearings in late November and early December that the FSA proliferated "red tape," was too solicitous of Mexican workers' rights, and was not concerned nearly enough with the problems that beset the farmers. In a press release, the California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) assailed the Mexican labor importation program as "a subterfuge to bring domestic labor under control and management of the Farm Security Administration. Disguised as part of the war effort, evidence developed so far indicates that the effect is to prevent importation of Mexican labor, demoralize domestic labor, dishearten and discourage farmers from producing to full capacity, or take a chance of getting additional labor to harvest crops." By seeking to control the importation and movement of workers, CFBF asserted, the "FSA has now devised a slick scheme which, if successful, would enable it to control farm wages, hours, and working conditions."[25]

While desirous of Mexican labor, in other words, many growers saw the incipient labor program as deeply threatening not just to their control over the farming, but even more to their *invested capital*. "Economic competition and the cutthroat world of profit systems," historian Devra Weber has written, "chartered the course for California agriculture and was early on embedded in land values, taxes, and profits and especially in the treatment and payment of workers." Farming in California was a business, not a way of life. And the business of farming had been rocked hard by the previous decade of depression, labor unrest, and state intervention. Because of this the CFBF "had what amounted to a one-dimensional view of the depression," according to its historian, Lawrence Jelinek. "The underlying rule was that recovery could be divorced from reform. When New Deal programs such as . . . marketing and control measures, concentrated upon recovery, the California Farm Bureau Federation endorsed such actions. . . . When the administration accepted the premise that sustained prosperity was dependent on some restructuring of American society, the or-

ganization balked." This ideology was carried over into the wartime programs. To the degree that these programs advanced farm business interest (e.g., wage ceilings, production quotas, etc.) they were embraced, if critically. To the degree they portended any sort of reform—as the labor importation and transportation programs did—they were fought.[26]

Within a month of his January 1943 inauguration, Governor Warren was sternly reminded by the executive vice president of one large orchard corporation that "California produces 46% of the United States fruits and nuts, 24% of the vegetables, 26% of the sugar beets, and that production must be maintained and can be increased under your leadership." Such leadership required "aggressive action" in cutting red tape—including especially a cleaning out of the DIR (late home of Carey McWilliams and the DIH), which had suffered under Governor Olson's "maladministration"—and a concerted state effort to market California agricultural products. Such aggressive action had to be designed to advance the war effort, but also to safeguard investments in agriculture. The high values per acre that marked California farming, growers thought, were constantly at risk. This had been shown in the deflation of the early 1920s, and again in the deep depression of the 1930s. It was shown each and every year, when harvests—the single time of year when investments could be turned into profits—were threatened by uncooperative weather, pests, fluctuating market conditions, labor shortages, or labor unrest. Under these circumstances, anything lessening grower control over supplies, flexibility, and cost of labor had to be fought.[27]

The employment guarantees in both the Mexican National and the domestic labor programs were a case in point. Before the labor importation and transportation programs, with the guarantee of employment for at least 75 percent of the time, the risks associated with bad weather, untimely harvests, disadvantageous markets, or poor planning were borne, to a significant degree, by workers. The employment guarantees, however, shifted some of this risk back onto the "shoulders of the employers." For many growers this was simply intolerable. All manner of means were devised to avoid it. Perhaps the most common were to reject the FSA ruling that the 75 percent rule applied to each work day of 8 hours minimum, and insist it applied instead to a 48-hour week *in toto*, and to argue that it did not apply at all if gross wages for the week exceeded the 30-cent minimum wage stipulated in the international agreement, multiplied by 36 hours (75% of 48 hours, or $10.60, considerably less than the $3 per day subsistence payment required in the contract), no matter what the prevailing hourly or piece-rate wages in the area were.[28]

Sometimes the mandates of the FSA, the terms of the "cooperative employ-

ment agreement" made between the FSA and the growers associations, and the terms of the "individual work agreements" made with braceros were simply ignored by growers. In early November 1942, 1,800 workers were approved for the winter lettuce harvest in the Imperial Valley, despite a clear surplus of domestic workers, and plans were laid for a "gala reception" for the first to arrive.* Living and working conditions for farm workers in the Imperial Valley, long a center of grower radicalism and vigilante violence,† were notoriously bad. Whatever their reception, the early braceros soon found themselves housed in camps that were "substandard" and "totally unsatisfactory," denied the medical care guaranteed in their contracts, and, against both the spirit and the letter of the international agreement, sent to work as strikebreakers.‡ Soon after their arrival, a frost damaged the pea crop, in which many braceros were destined to work (despite having been approved for lettuce). Despite lost pay, growers refused to pay the mandated three dollars per day subsistence. Many braceros were transferred instead to carrot tying, in which domestics were already employed. With braceros on hand (most of whom worked less than seven hours a day), growers lowered the piece rate for carrot tying to six cents a bunch. On January 9, domestic workers (who themselves were either Mexican American or longstanding Mexican immigrants) struck, demanding eight cents a bunch. "Needless to say they were replaced by our Mexicanos until they were willing to return to work and be good boys," as one FSA investigator put it. According to this investigator, staff on the Farm Labor Transportation Program (the importation branch of the FSA) connived with the Imperial Valley Farmers Association (IVFA) to "repatriate" (i.e., deport) any braceros who "refused to work any where

* A total of 786 Mexican Nationals actually arrived in the Imperial Valley before the end of 1942. "Farm Labor Transportation Program (September 4, 1942–December 15, 1942)," Galarza Papers, Box 27, File 3.

† And as we will see, soon to become the hearth of bracero-era struggles; time and time again, what happened in the Imperial set the pattern for everywhere else in the state.

‡ Despite freezing temperatures, FSA inspector Rutledge reported that "the Imperial Valley boys . . . failed to supply bedding for the nationals," and the FSA was far too lenient on them. Indeed, Rutledge was scathing in his critique of his colleagues. He noted, for example, that unsatisfactory conditions were reported as satisfactory by employees of the FSA, employees Rutledge complained were totally beholden to grower interests. The close collusion of bureaucrats charged with protecting the interests of both domestic and Mexican National workers and growers bent on exploiting them to the fullest was to persist for nearly the length of the program in the Imperial Valley, only being partially undermined by a housecleaning conducted by the new Pat Brown gubernatorial administration; see chapter 10; see generally, California Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 145–49.

or any place"—that is, who refused to work as strikebreakers. Thirty-seven to forty Mexican Nationals were deported, against all provisions of the program, between January 9 and February 3. When FSA investigators arrived on the scene in early February, the strike was "still going on," but pay was holding at six cents a bunch, and braceros, under threat of deportation, kept working.[29]

Tom Finney, a USES agent in Imperial Valley, had certified the need for bracero workers,* but he also noted, "Before these Mexican Nationals came there was a great deal of unrest among the local Mexicans, they were demanding higher pay out of all reason. A meeting had been scheduled to be held in Brawley of all Mexican agricultural workers in the Valley to demand a flat scale of 74¢ to $1.00 per hour and $16.00 per acre for thinning. This was way beyond the price the average farmer could hope to pay. You don't hear any of these rumors now and personally I think the importation of these Mexicans has done more for the farmers of the Imperial Valley than anyone would have thought possible." Included in this "more," apparently, was a situation where Mexican Nationals were sometimes paying for the privilege of working. After deductions for room and board, as well as for the "twistems" and twine used to tie the carrots—deductions that were in all likelihood illegal (see chapter 6)—many braceros "were left penniless"; some were left in debt; none were paid the equivalent of fifty cents per hour that had been determined to be the prevailing wage before Mexican Nationals were imported. At the root of the problem, according to Ed Routledge, the FSA inspector, was that in the Imperial, growers had been allowed to "handpick the FSA Staff and run the [Farm Labor Transportation] program . . ."; growers were able to exploit labor with impunity, something they had long seen as their right.[30]

Even with this level of control over the program, even with this ability to use the program to unilaterally set wages at a cost vanishingly close to zero, even with this ability to deploy Mexican National workers as strikebreakers, no matter what the provisions of the international agreement, growers up and down the state remained deeply dissatisfied with both the labor importation and the domestic transportation programs. There were not, according to the CFBF, enough employees of the U.S. and state employment services who were as solicitous of farmers' needs as those in the Imperial Valley; the USES "plays closely with the

* Finney eventually went to work for the Farm Placement Service (FPS) of the California Department of Employment, which was the California state agent in charge of implementing the bracero program in the postwar years. During another strike in the Imperial in 1952, Finney was removed as the Valley leader of the FPS (though he remained employed there), which union activists saw as a blow against the control of "the farm placement machinery" in the Imperial; Galarza to Mitch, June 11, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6.

labor unions," the CFBF complained.* The Associated Farmers complained that the earliest braceros were "not too satisfactory." Too many had no agricultural background, and the "field men of the Farm Security Administration did a poor job of handling the situation in its early stages." Numerous farmers and organizations lobbied the new California governor to set up a state-level program to import labor and to coordinate other aspects of agricultural production.[31]

In mid-March 1943, concerned about what he thought was a growing labor shortage in California, Governor Warren authorized C. C. Teague of Sunkist to serve as his "personal representative to contact Secretary of Agriculture Wickard, War Manpower Commission Chairman McNutt, and other Federal Agencies as may be necessary for immediate relief of the California manpower shortage. . . . I am fully convinced that our farm manpower problem is so crucial that unless immediate action is taken for the importation of Mexican farm labor, California will drop further behind in the effort to reach its production goal." Like most large growers in California, and like the officials of all the major farm lobbies in Washington, Teague was dedicated to the elimination of the FSA in general, and as overseer of the labor importation program in particular. Before departing for Washington to lobby on the governor's behalf, Teague solicited testimonials from the major farmers associations and big growers in the state concerning the "difficulties" caused by the FSA in the previous harvest. But in addition he had a second goal: to secure permission, and federal funding, to set up a separate Mexican recruiting program for the benefit of California agribusiness alone. Working with Thomas Robertson, a farmer in the Simi Valley with extensive experience managing agribusiness in Mexico, Teague developed a plan for a "California Section, Agricultural Labor Administration."† Paid for by the USDA, but staffed with representatives of California growers, this organization would be given the "authority, independent of any other recruiting set up [i.e., the existing FSA-run program] to enter into negotiations and agreements" with Mexico, the goal of which being to gain exclusive rights to recruit labor from a point in northern Mexico to be determined by the Mexican govern-

* Whatever the CFBF's concerns, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in California, including the radical Harry Bridges of the International Longshore Workers Union, supported the continued importation of Mexican workers as part of the war effort. Rathbone to Warren, March 18, 1943, and the attached telegraph by Bridges to the president of the Confederation of Latin American Workers (n.d.), Warren Papers, FPC, File 725.

† On March 1, 1943, Secretary Wickard created the Agricultural Labor Administration within the Department of Agriculture, "with authority to develop farm labor policies and procedures to which all other Department agencies were expected to adhere"; the American Farm Bureau opposed this move. Scruggs, "Bracero Program," 161.

ment as far south as one hundred miles north of Mexico City. Teague wanted authority to recruit fifty thousand workers through this agency between April and September. If he could gain this authority to create a separate California program, Teague informed other farm leaders, he would then lend his support to the nationwide effort to eliminate the FSA (and turn the farm labor programs into something far friendlier to grower interests).[32]

Teague's considerable chutzpah quickly alienated him from the other lobbyists. Representatives of the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Grange, and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, among others, were working hard to remake the farm labor programs. The need for action was, it seemed, pressing. For various reasons, recruitment of workers in Mexico had come to a stop in February. Farm lobbyists wanted both to get the flow of braceros moving again and to use the halt in the program as a bludgeon against the FSA.* There was a tricky politics to this position and it required a common front. Teague threatened to upset the required unity and to undermine a developing consensus on how the labor program should be changed. Teague pushed ahead with his plans for a "California Section" anyway, concerned that the Washington farm organizations were themselves a growing threat to the importation of Mexican workers to California.[33]

At stake were early drafts of what was to become Joint Resolution 96 in Congress, a bill to place the farm labor supply programs under statutory law and to give them their own budgetary appropriation.† One of the growers organiza-

* For three weeks beginning January 15, the program was suspended because there were no orders from growers; for more than a month after February 8, the program was suspended by Mexico. The reasons for this latter stoppage were largely internal to Mexican politics, but the FSA did not publicize these reasons for fear any comment "construed as criticism toward the Mexican Government would probably have the effect of further delaying the necessary authority to transport . . . workers to California and possibly would cause the Mexican Government to issue orders which would definitely prohibit further transportation of these workers." Though Teague admitted growers knew that the reasons for the stoppage "resulted from political disturbances in Mexico," farm lobbyists in Washington used the occasion to further cast blame on the FSA as an agency that was obstructionist to growers and the war effort, a charge that, because of the political situation, the FSA could not answer. Anglim to Koetitz, March 3, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 724; Teague to Warren, March 30, 1943, Teague Papers, Box 58, File D; Messersmith to Secretary of State, March 1, 1943; and Anglim to Walker, May 1, 1943, both cited in Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 42, 206, 213.

† From its inception as a negotiated agreement between Mexico and the United States, the program was paid for by a series of allocations from the President's Emergency Fund, amounting to $4.5 million between July and December 1942. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 26.

tions' goals was, as Teague put it, to legislate "out of existence the present master contract which we have with Mexico regardless of whether or not a better or more favorable contract could be negotiated." Teague thought this proposal would be "fatal" not only to his own plan for California recruiting, but also for any importation whatsoever from Mexico. The real problem, according to Teague, was not the agreement with Mexico, but the contract between the FSA and the growers associations—the cooperative employment agreement. The problem with that agreement was that it devolved most of the responsibility, and much of the costs, for compliance with the international agreement onto the growers, particularly the 75 percent employment guarantee. A second goal was to hand the labor supply program over to the Agricultural Extension Service, an agency understood to be much friendlier to growers' interests than the FSA. A third goal was to "freeze" domestic labor in place—to create localized reserve labor pools—by preventing the movement of agricultural labor "from one county to another or from one state to another without the consent of the county farm advisor [the Extension Service agent]." In a tacit admission of whom Extension Service agents really worked for (and what was behind growers' desire to put the program in their hands), Teague noted "that no matter how great the surplus . . . no farm advisor would take responsibility of releasing labor to move to another area," a problem that could have severe repercussions for California, in Teague's view. Teague thought his California plan could work within the confines of the current international agreement until a better one could be negotiated; and he thought access to labor from other states was likely to remain a necessity for California growers. Teague's position annoyed the head of the American Farm Bureau Federation, who professed a deep desire "to eliminate [Secretary of Agriculture] Wickard and get rid of the Farm Security Administration" at any cost.[34]

Teague never secured permission to create a "California Section" empowered to directly recruit in Mexico, but he and the other farm organizations, whatever their differences, did manage to get the Department of Agriculture to strip the FSA of its oversight of the farm labor programs in March 1943, a move ratified by Congress when it passed PL 45 (based on Joint Resolution 96) in April.* PL 45 gave the national farm lobbies much of what they wanted: a heavily subsidized labor supply, without responsibility for its maintenance. While PL 45 did not allow direct recruiting in Mexico by growers, and it did not explicitly

* The FSA retained just enough authority, and just enough funding, to meet the letter of the agreement with Mexico. One of the provisions of PL 45 was that the United States had to renegotiate the agreement with Mexico to bring it in line with the terms of the law; with that accomplished, the FSA would be removed altogether. Scruggs, "Bracero Program," 161–63, 166.

abrogate the agreement with Mexico, it did undermine it by allowing the "Immigration Commissioner to admit workers on his own terms."[35]

And while, after much intervention by the Roosevelt administration, it retained government guarantees of working and living conditions for foreign workers, crucially for the way the whole era of the bracero program was going to unfold, it eliminated them for domestic workers. "No part of the funds herein appropriated or made available . . . for the recruiting, transportation, or placement of agricultural workers," PL 45 read, "shall be used directly or indirectly to fix, regulate, or impose minimum wages or housing standards, to regulate hours of work, or to impose or enforce collective-bargaining requirements or union membership, with respect to any agricultural labor, except with respect to workers imported into the United States from a foreign country and then only to the extent required to comply with agreements with the government of such foreign country." Attached to PL 45 was the Pace Amendment, which as the American Farm Bureau Federation (but not Teague) hoped, banned the use of funds to transport domestic workers outside their home county, without the written consent of the county extension agent. With the signing of PL 45 on April 29, the Emergency Farm Labor Program came into existence, and with it the FSA's role in the labor supply program was eliminated* and a new agency, the Office of Labor, was established within the War Food Administration (WFA) to handle the program.[36]

Mexico established a limit of 50,000 workers for 1943, but by mid-May only 17,880 braceros had been requested by U.S. growers. Having worked hard to convince the Mexican government of the pressing need for farm labor in the United States, the U.S. embassy in Mexico pressured the WFA to increase recruitment. C. C. Teague was ready to step up, working again with Thomas Robertson, who had been appointed by the federal labor administrator, Colonel Jay Taylor, to the position of Mexican labor recruiting agent. Teague volunteered his services to coordinate the recruitment, housing, and distribution of Mexican workers around California. But he retained concerns about the program as it was now set. There were, Teague made clear, still flaws in "the present methods of handling Mexican nationals [which] *must be immediately and firmly corrected*." Without correction, imported braceros were liable to "retrograde to the condition of the migrant labor from the Dust Bowl and the conditions of many of the Mexican Nationals [that is, domestic workers of Mexican descent] who

* The FSA continued to limp along as an agency, suffering transfer after transfer of its functions to other federal agencies, as well as the out-migration of most of the reformers who had been its heart, until it was finally eliminated altogether in 1946.

have been here for many years." The problem with domestic workers, according to Teague, was that "they are spending a large part of their time hunting for peak wages, caused by employers paying these wages to save crops from wasting in the fields. . . . Absenteeism and turnover of this type of labor is terrific; drunkenness is common."[37]

Teague thus laid out a set of "inflexible rules of instruction [that] should be issued by Colonel Taylor" and Robertson and enforced on the growers associations receiving imported workers:

1. "That any individual who proves to be an agitator or trouble-maker should be immediately returned to Mexico."
2. That any worker doing unsatisfactory work be given one more chance; if there is no improvement he was to be repatriated.
3. That no imported workers, receiving the stated prevailing wage, "should under any circumstance, be permitted to leave the contract employer to seek . . . work elsewhere because of higher wages or more favorable working conditions."
4. That any such workers be returned to Mexico immediately.
5. That workers be required to live in growers' camps, and eat growers' meals.

The problem, according to Teague, was that if such rules were not enforced, "these Nationals will soon get the idea that all that is necessary for them to get transferred to a new job where they have heard that conditions are more favorable as to wages, board, climate or type of work, is to file complaints and make demands. If they do this they will soon lose their value just like the Filipinos and the migrants from the Dust Bowl are rapidly losing their value."[38]

A "Dream of Heaven"

Even with increased control over the labor importation program, even with the creation of a labor supply that McWilliams would eventually describe as a growers' "dream of heaven," farm workers—both domestic and imported—remained a significant problem of management. It was a problem exacerbated, though not necessarily transformed, by the war emergency. If it were not addressed, Governor Warren claimed, "fertile land will lie idle, crops will not be harvested, farmers will not only lose their investments but the results of their labor, there will be a shortage of food and people may go hungry." In California, this was a problem centered on the question of labor supply, but also one that exceeded it: it cut right to the heart of the irrationality—"the lack of sense

and system"—in current agricultural practices in the state. Simultaneous with sending Teague to Washington, therefore, Warren pushed for the establishment of a Farm Production Council charged with supplementing the federal labor supply programs by "recruit[ing] men, women and children for farm labor . . . transport[ing] them to their places of employment . . . provid[ing] for their housing where none may now be in existence . . . feed[ing] them where facilities are not otherwise available," as well as "rendering to farmers whatever assistance is necessary to the maximum production of food and fiber crops."[39]

To address the problem, therefore, Warren called a special session of the state legislature to pass the Food and Fiber Act of 1943. Written by CFBF officials "and their sponsoring legislators," as Warren put it, the act created the FPC as a farmer-only body with representation from various crops and regions.* The act was signed into law on March 29, 1943, but the FPC worked only in "an advisory capacity" until June 24, when the act took effect. The act charged the FPC, with a budget of $1.8 million, with helping California growers achieve the "maximum production and availability of food and fiber possible from the farms of this State; to provide the most effective use of existing farm labor and facilities; and to augment such facilities."[40]

Finding itself in frequent bureaucratic conflict with the state Extension Service, which had been charged by PL 45 with many of the same functions, as well as with California's own DIR (and especially the DoH), the FPC focused particularly on supplying farm worker housing. But in its first year it also created pools of Mexican National workers to be shared out to smaller growers who did not have need for one hundred workers and were not part of labor associations (before some administrative changes in the WFA made this less necessary). It operated a transportation service for domestic and bracero workers, shuttling them from farm to farm and from harvest to harvest. It provided materiel and supplies to growers for private labor camps, often negotiating with the federal

* Warren pushed the legislature unsuccessfully to add the director of the DIR to the council, both because he was concerned about organized labor's dissatisfaction that the FPC was a grower-only organization and because he thought the appointment of the director, then Paul Scharrenberg, a former head of the California Federation of Labor (CFL), would quell that dissatisfaction, and because the head of the DIR oversaw the department in charge of labor camp inspections, health and safety, and minimum hour and minimum wage laws for women workers. Scharrenberg, however, was no friend of agricultural workers. As head of the CFL he had promised the Associated Farmers that AFL unions would not try to organize agricultural workers. As he said in 1935, "Only fanatics are willing to live in shacks or tents and get their heads broken in the interest of migratory labor." Warren to Hatfield, March 24, 1943; Warren to Sweigert, March 19, 1943, both in Warren Papers, FPC, File 725; Scharrenberg quoted in Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 274.

government for priority in ration lists. It organized county-level committees charged with assessing local needs, rationalizing production and the use of labor, and organizing the sharing of machinery. It created child care centers in an effort to recruit more female labor to the fields (a project soon abandoned). It lobbied against meat and other foodstuff rationing. It propagandized for growers. And it fought for the continued importation of Mexican workers. Indeed, according to the bill's sponsor in the California Senate, "one of [the FPC's] most important responsibilities [would be] the sending of official representatives to Washington, D.C. to point out the importance of the recruitment and placement activities of the Extension Service and the importing of Mexican national workers for agriculture."[41]

It did almost everything, in other worlds, Carey McWilliams thought necessary to rationalize farming in California, through an institution not unlike the one he proposed in his call for a (national) FLA. And like McWilliams's FLA, it did nothing to encourage the self-organization of workers or change the patterns of ownership McWilliams earlier thought were at the root of California's exploitative and violent landscape. Indeed, the FPC was poised to make things worse. Unlike the proposed FLA, the FPC was totally dominated by, and was designed to work exclusively in the interests of, growers. Worker representation (to say nothing of worker power) was explicitly excluded. As Lawrence Jelinek argued, written by the Farm Bureau, "the Food and Fiber Act played an indispensible role in the continuing struggle by employers to maintain a surplus flow of tractable labor."[42] To understand precisely how is one of the tasks of chapter 2.

Morphology

Things on the Land

"IT IS PROPER AND IMPORTANT to think of cultural landscape as nearly everything that we can see when we go outdoors," geographer Peirce Lewis influentially wrote at the end of the 1970s, and it is. But how should we understand what we see? How should we understand the specific patterns of farms (large and small, monocropped or not), irrigation canals, labor camps, packing sheds, and skid row shapeups that comprise the California agricultural landscape? How, in particular, should we understand all these things on the land in relation to the struggles over labor power that comprised the bracero era and that are at the heart of this book?[1]

To start, it is vital to understand the landscape not just as things haphazardly on the land, but rather as *morphology*: a shape and a structure. To deploy a "morphological eye," then, requires engaging in a synthetic practice that seeks not to describe "simply an actual scene viewed by an observer," but rather "a generalization derived from the observation of individual scenes," as Carl Sauer put it in his foundational text on "The Morphology of Landscape." The point is to "establish the character of the landscape and to place it in a system," to relate the things on the land functionally to both the overall view and the structuring forces at work. Understanding these structuring forces is vital, for a landscape is more than a way of ordering and representing the world (though it is certainly these things); it is also the *material basis* for, as well as a *result of*, economic and social activity and therefore a central site of struggle over the shape and structure of the political economy. As George Henderson has established so compellingly, the landscape—as morphology, as shape and structure—plays a vital role in the circulation of capital (as well as its accumulation). It is also, of course, foundational in the circulation, or mobility, of labor (as well as its ability to stay put).[2]

In order for capital to circulate—in order for it to enter into the production process, come out the other side as a new commodity, and eventually return a surplus to its owners—a landscape must be produced. The circulation of some parts of capital (in the form of money or other financial instruments, commodities, returns on commodities, etc.) requires some other parts of capital be "fixed" in place, fixed *in* and *as* the landscape. The built landscape—fixed

capital—regulates what is called the "turnover time" of circulating capital: how long it takes to make a circuit from money form, to productive capital, to commodities, and to returns on those commodities in the form of profit. The built landscape thus develops in relation to (but because there are countervailing forces, including workers' own efforts to construct a world more to their own liking, not necessarily in total accordance with) the needs of capital circulation at particular moments in time. One of the primary functions of the FPC, as we will see in detail, was precisely to construct a landscape commensurate with the needs of agricultural capital in California, if not primarily the landscape of production, then certainly a landscape vital to labor's *reproduction*. As Marx argued, the "maintenance and reproduction of the working class is, and ever must be, a necessary condition of the reproduction of capital." The arrangement of things on the land—what we see when we go outdoors—sits right at the heart of the dual reproduction of capital and labor power.[3]

Some of those things—prepared fields, packing sheds, combine reapers (or eventually "monster" lettuce harvesters)—are fixed capital: built so that people can produce. Others are what are called "consumption fund" items—the barracks and mess halls built for braceros, for example—that are constructed in order for people to live: to sleep, to eat, to play, to consume. Some are both: the highways and railroads, for example, that allow for crops to move from field to packinghouse to market (and workers to get from home to field) also allow for people to move about for all kinds of reasons that have little or nothing to do, directly, with commodity production. Those portions of fixed capital and the consumption fund that are relatively immobile, like a packing shed or a permanent labor camp, comprise what David Harvey calls "the built environment," which "functions as a vast, humanly created resource system, comprising use values embedded in the physical landscape, which can be utilized for production, consumption, and exchange." Though fixed, embedded, the built environment is a dynamic "palimpsest of landscapes fashioned according to the dictates of different modes of production at different stages of their historical development," as well as under transforming technological conditions. Much California farmland, for example, was first alienated and "improved" as massive land grants made under the late feudal, colonial conditions of the Spanish Empire and early Mexican state, reworked as massive bonanza wheat farms, partially subdivided and intensified when the wheat boom went bust and rail travel to the East became possible, and so forth. In each era, a different kind of built environment was constructed to support the allocation and productive use of the land. "All over our ill-kept, shadeless, dusty roads . . . a house is an unwonted landmark," Henry George wrote with only a touch of hyperbole at the

height of the wheat boom. "Fruit culture," Kevin Starr wrote of the period that followed with just about the same degree of hyperbole, "nurtured the values of responsible land use, prudent capitalization, cooperation among growers . . . above all else [it] encouraged rural civility in the care of homes, the funding of schools, churches and libraries, the nurturing of social and recreational amenities which stood in complete contrast to the Wild West attitude of wheat."[4]

The landscape, in other words, is produced. And almost all of the elements are produced, and have long been produced, as commodities: as means of producing and securing surplus value, either directly or indirectly. It is built for a purpose; it is *functional*, even as it might be highly contested. Actors—particular growers, operating individually or collectively, state agents, workers, families seeking to make a comfortable home in an unincorporated shacktown at the edge of Stockton or Bakersfield—seek to reshape the land and embed in the physical landscape all manner of things commensurate with their needs, ranging from irrigation ditches to tent platforms to power lines to massive warehouses. Such impositions on the land, such embeddedness, is a product of will, especially social will, and of struggle, especially social struggle, as differing people, organizations, and institutions seek to make the landscape functional, to make it meet whatever their specific needs, desires, or mandates are. The result is rarely the work of a single actor unilaterally imposing her will, no matter how hard she might try. There is not a single "author" of the landscape.

If the built landscape is a necessary foundation for the production of capital, the reproduction of labor, and the circulation of both, then it can also become a barrier to these—and thus to further capital accumulation—as new production techniques are implemented in it or elsewhere, transportation technologies change, relations of labor are altered, or working people successfully claim a greater share of the surplus produced or otherwise wrench improvements in their standards of living from a reluctant capital. It must be destroyed—or radically altered—and a new landscape must be constructed. Capital invested in the existing built landscape, in other words, is always capital at risk of devaluation through obsolescence. It is at risk of devaluation from other sources too, since this risk operates at a range of time and spatial scales. The risk of devaluation in the landscape is particularly acute in agricultural landscapes, because not only the built environment is at risk (over the relatively long term), but also the crops themselves (over the relatively short term). Unlike many other forms of commodity production, crop production is highly temporally uneven—as growers across the state never tire of asserting. There is a lag-time between planting and harvesting when crops might be devalued through changes in market and labor

conditions, or by devastation by pests or disease, drought or flood: like the built environment, nature itself can be an obstacle to production, even as it is a necessary condition of production. Even with these risks, labor demands during the growing season are often slight (and even slighter during the off-season), as we have already seen. By contrast, harvest periods are often short and intense, demanding large inputs of labor. Importantly, different crops have different maturation periods, harvest lengths, and harvest intensities. Therefore, the degree and scale of monocropping in a region (and across regions)—Steven Stoll's "enormous event in the history of the North American environment"—will be a crucial determinant of labor demand and labor circulation in the landscape (or conversely, assuring particular patterns of labor circulation is essential to the development of monocropped regions).[5]

Crucially, the capital tied up in, and the surplus value coaxed out of, crops is only realized when they are sold—to the packer or in the market—and thus the harvest is the vital moment of the whole production process. On top of that, since fixed capital, in the form of tools or machines or those parts of the built environment necessary for the production process, such as conditioned soil, irrigation infrastructure, greenhouses, and so forth (all the various "means of production"), can only ever transfer value to produced commodities, not in and of themselves produce new, surplus value, the moment of the harvest is doubly crucial. A harvest gone bad or missed might mean missed payments on machines, on land, or on buildings; it might mean an effective devaluation of capital stock—all those "sunk costs" that *are* the landscape.[6]

Labor had better be there, in other words, and the landscape for that labor had better be set such that labor of the right kind appears in the right place at the right time and at the right price. This is no easy feat, and the struggles to assure labor appears—and to define what is meant by "right" in each case—are intense. Out of them arises a new morphology, a new arrangement of things on the land. What we see when we go outdoors, growers insisted, and not just for the sake of the war effort either, had better not be crops rotting in the fields.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Struggle for a Rational Farming Landscape

Worker Housing and Grower Power

The camps operate as labor pools from which men are drawn in small groups by the surrounding farms and orchards. On their return to camp they wash or take showers, eat and lounge around or write letters until bed time. Occasionally the men sing in trios or quartettes in the bunkhouses or under the trees. Some camp managers frown on this sort of thing. Others think it is good for morale. There is practically no spontaneous group activity either in sports, singing or discussion. On the whole, the camps . . . give the impression of single-minded concentration on the job in an atmosphere of drab and unrelieved routine. Time and again camp managers stated that the most difficult problem they face is the boredom of the men.

Ernesto Galarza, "Personal and Confidential Memorandum on Mexican Contract Workers in the United States," August 28, 1944, 3–4

THE FPC WAS COMPOSED OF seven leading agriculturalists. George H. Wilson, from Clarksburg (in the Delta), was a director of the National Beet Growers Association, the California Asparagus Growers Association, and the American Farm Bureau Federation. Camille Garnier was president of the Los Angeles Farm Bureau Federation and a grower of vegetables. Loren Bamert was president of the California Cattleman's Association and a cattle rancher from Ione at the edge of the Sierra foothills. John Watson, a dairy farmer from Petaluma (and president of Consolidated Milk Producers in San Francisco), was rapidly replaced by Joe Hart, a dairy farmer in Modesto. A. J. McFadden, from Santa Ana, represented the Southland and was chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the State Chamber of Commerce, an officer of the California Fruit Growers Exchange (Sunkist) and the California Walnut Growers Association (Diamond), and so a close colleague of C. C. Teague. W. L. Smith was a director of the National Cotton Council, a member of the Executive Committee of the California Grange, and a member of the profarmer State Board of Agriculture; he grew cotton in Buttonwillow, the heart of the San Joaquin cotton belt. Finally, Frank Shay of San Jose, longtime political rival of Earl Warren, longstanding farmer-activist closely connected to the Associated Farmers, and president of the California Prune and Apricot Growers Association, was appointed chairman of the FPC. The FPC quickly appointed William B. Parker as its executive director. Parker, a farmer from Lodi, formerly the state director of agriculture under Governor Olson, was also an appointee to the federal Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the Board of Economic Warfare.[1]

The FPC's mandate was, in essence, to develop a "morphological eye" for the state: to see the big picture of agricultural production—at least from a farmer's perspective—and then to make those little transformations in the landscape (the construction of new labor camps, the reconstruction of old ones, the redeployment of materiel around the state) that would assure increased production and successfully realized profit. The need for such an agency seemed pressing. As the Food and Fiber Act was being written, reports claimed California farmers in 1942 "experienced losses of essential food and fiber crops exceeding . . . an estimated $14,500,000"* or perhaps as much as $25 million, presumably due to a lack of labor. At the same time, California farmers also reported they brought in a "record harvest" that year, shattering in value terms the next closest year by 12 percent. The job of the FPC in general, and Parker in particular, was to assure

* One FSA analyst noted that if true this was a loss of only about 2 percent of the total production of "major crops" in the state. Rowell to Silvermaster, January 24, 1944, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 5, File 33.

those losses were eliminated and that record was once again broken. The FPC therefore set itself up, in the words of Shay, as an "agency of the government operated as a business" that was "directed by farmers and guided by the decisions of county committees of farmers."* The FPC took as its special charge the provision of housing for the Mexican National workers now being imported into the state in large numbers, as well as for domestic workers wherever housing was needed.[2]

The FPC quickly got to work. By the peak of the 1943 harvest season, the FPC had ballooned to some 600 employees (though it settled back to 165 employees in July 1944, and by the end of that year was down to 122), divided into 6 departments ranging from transportation to purchasing, property to personnel. In its first 18 months, the FPC developed 9 major labor camp–oriented projects. First, it acquired 18 camps from the State Relief Agency and the State Guard—some 270 buildings, with a capacity of 2,600 workers and valued at nearly $75,000—refurbished them, moved many to centers of agriculture, sold some buildings to individual farmers, and leased 9 of the camps to labor supply associations. Second, it worked with county fair associations to convert buildings in 11 county fairgrounds into worker housing for 2,250. Third, it took control of the buildings in the Japanese Assembly Centers (located on county fairgrounds in Stockton, Merced, and Tulare) after the army relocated Japanese internees to concentration camps in the interior. It converted the buildings in these centers into 16 x 20 foot shacks (at a cost of more than $30,000 for materiel alone) and gave them to individual farmers and growers associations (with the latter paying only for moving, setting up, and sometimes providing foundations for the shacks; FPC paid for everything else). "The equivalent" of 1,640 16 × 20 shacks was supplied to 427 growers and associations, creating housing for 11,531 workers. Third, it retained some buildings at each assembly site and used them as "holding camp facilities"—housing 5,469 workers—for braceros before they were distributed to growers.† The FPC argued that such facilities were necessary because the nature of the program (relying especially on rail transport) "meant that on some occasions workers had to be transported into the State before they

* Farm organizations further vouchsafed their interests by assuring that CFBF President Ray Wiser or his representative attended every FPC meeting; labor representatives were excluded even as observers at the meetings, though one appeared at a meeting on July 12, 1945. FPC, minutes of meeting, July 12, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733.

† The cost of restoring the fairgrounds to their original use after the war became a source of longstanding friction between the U.S. Army, the State of California, and various county fair associations; see, for example, FPC, minutes of meeting, March 1, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732.

were actually required"; the camps were also important for when braceros were between jobs. Operating costs of these bracero camps were paid by the WFA.[3]

Fourth, the FPC purchased a large transient labor camp from Libby, McNeil, Libby at Ryde (in the Sacramento Delta) for a little more than $10,000; it sold 20 of the 83 buildings to area farmers (netting $3,500), and spent $12,000 repairing the rest. The new Ryde camp could house 350 workers in bunks and apartments (at rents between $3.50 and $4.50 a week), and had space for another 200 trailers. At the end of 1944, the FPC sold the camp to a local grower for $11,000—about half what the council had spent on its original purchase and refurbishment. Its fifth major program was to construct, outfit, and operate several "demountable" mobile camps, deployed at FPC expense to 32 locations in 1943, and 28 in 1944, to provide temporary harvest-time housing at no expense to growers. Over the seasons it spent nearly $1 million (exclusive of operating costs) on this project.[4]

Sixth, the FPC experimented with camps for "Negro workers with farm experience and transients from so-called 'skid-rows' in metropolitan areas, neither project being successful," FPC publicly claimed, because work quality was poor, camp conditions were substandard, and it had trouble collecting rents from the black workers.* Seventh, it built camps to house prisoners of war labor in 5 locations (housing 2,840 prisoners plus their guards—half the prisoner of war [POW] population in the state). It also built a prison camp for the California Conserving Company in Ryde, for which at first it charged rent, but later provided free "under the assumption that the Department of Corrections was in fact responsible for the camp." Eighth, the FPC assumed title to three Civilian Conservation Corps camps and gave them to local farmers. One camp was broken up and the buildings distributed to farmers in the Napa Valley area. A second camp in Watsonville was handed over to the Santa Cruz County Growers labor association. The third camp was given to the giant J. G. Boswell Company in Corcoran. Only Boswell assumed any of the costs, and then just for the actual relocation of the buildings. Finally, the FPC contracted with a number of commissary companies to feed workers in council-built or refurbished camps. However, this service was combined with a sustained effort to encourage the formation of growers' labor procurement associations that would manage the camps and provide meal services. Over the course of its commissary program, the FPC lost more than $30,000 (about 5%) on its already subsidized contracts.[5]

* In its public report on its activities, FPC blamed its inability to collect rents on the residents of the "Negro Camp," but in its private minutes, it is clear that rents were being siphoned off by camp management. *Report of Activities* I, 10; FPC, minutes of meeting, January 11, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732.

In addition to this direct provision of worker housing and service, the council aided growers in getting "priorities" for rationed materiel necessary to build or repair their own camps, and purchased camp equipment (mess equipment, blankets, mattresses, furniture, etc.) for resale or rental to farmers. It also operated a bracero labor pool for growers not formed into associations, provided transportation for workers around the state and locally, and supplied trucks to growers and canners to get crops to appropriate markets or processing facilities. As a result of these efforts, FPC boasted that "cash farm income" for 1944 totaled $1.65 billion, a 10 percent increase over 1943, which itself showed a massive increase over the "record harvest" of 1942. The 1944 income was two-and-a-half times the 1936–40 average, despite ceilings on many farm commodity prices that "kept figures substantially below where it [sic] would have been." California alone now accounted for 13 percent of farm production in the United States. The demand for workers had grown concomitantly: by the first week of September 1944, some 442,312 workers were "needed" in the state. The emergency provision of FPC housing was critical to meeting this need and thus to setting those records.[6]

Though not the first time the government directly intervened in the provision of worker housing in agricultural California, this was certainly the largest, most comprehensive, and most rapid program of state-sponsored and subsidized housing in the history of the state—and its transformative effects on the landscape, and on the system of agricultural production, were profound.

Worker Housing, Class Struggle, and State Intervention in the Fields of California

State intervention into farm worker housing had become critical in the twentieth century because labor camps occupied a pivotal place in the always-unfolding class war between growers and workers that marked the agricultural landscape. Unlike in many farming communities elsewhere in the United States, farm workers were rarely, or rarely exclusively, one or two "farm hands" either living directly with the farming family or with their own families in the nearby town. From its inception as an American enterprise in California, farming had been more akin to mining or lumbering: vast wealth, located at some distance from towns and cities, stripped out of the land. Workers had to be brought to the site of labor, and they had to be kept there—at least during the harvest and during other crucial if usually short-lived periods in the growing cycle.

Nonetheless, despite the sense that California farming was (and is) marked by a *transient* working class, California's growers in fact sometimes employed a

relatively large permanent working class. By 1900, the statewide industrial cattle empire of Miller & Lux, for example, employed some 1,200 full-time workers. While monthly turnover rates approached 40 and 50 percent, that number is both indicative of the nature of employment in California's industrialized farming, and good at hiding the fact that there was *therefore* a relatively large number of permanent and semipermanent employees and low-level managers. For the permanent and relatively stable employees, Miller & Lux built bunkhouses and mess halls on each of its ranches, the conditions of which were not bad; indeed, they could be quite good. These facilities made life reasonably tolerable for Miller & Lux's most valued employees. But they did something else as well: they became nodes in what famously came to be known as the "dirty plate circuit" in California. Beginning in the 1870s, Miller & Lux provided free meals to any migrant worker or tramp who showed up at the mess hall doors. While tramps were always kept moving, and usually forced to sleep in barns or hobo jungles, rather than in the bunkhouses, the dirty plate circuit provided Miller & Lux with a large, mobile, and impoverished reserve army that could be taken up and let go as labor demand warranted. At the same time, this large reserve army served to keep labor costs down, despite the isolation of many of the ranches, and helped "prevent all possible strikes for higher wages . . . by reminding employees of their replaceable status and insecure existence."[7]

Whether the free meals—served after the regular employees had eaten and off their used plates*—dampened disgruntlement and the low-level industrial sabotage that often accompanied California farm work (e.g., haystack burning; minor pilfering) is debatable. For food and living conditions remained a primary and persistent complaint among migrant workers. While the giant Miller & Lux took the route of investing in housing and mess facilities for its employees (as well as tramps), more typically growers argued that camp facilities were a luxury they could not afford. Labor camps were a fixed cost, and in many crops, with short, intense harvest seasons, housing for the harvest labor force would stand empty most of the year. Hops, cotton, or tomato growing had a very different yearly labor demand structure than did beef or dairy cattle ranching. As growers saw it, providing anything more than the most rudimentary facilities for temporary workers froze capital unproductively. Camps were capital costs that growers could ill afford, they frequently argued, especially given the

* Igler explains that the tradition of only allowing tramps to eat off dirty plates developed in large part because of the Chinese cooks' refusal to take on the extra work the policy of feeding any comer entailed. Miller & Lux acquiesced to this refusal in part because "it humbled the hungry bindle stiffs," teaching them their proper place in the reserve army. *Industrial Cowboys*, 132.

other high costs they faced—land and transportation to distant markets, for example. Just as long as there was a sufficiently large labor pool (i.e., one much larger than needed), and one that was sufficiently impoverished, there was no need for decent housing to attract harvest labor.

Such a practice was, of course, contradictory. Bad housing conditions became a primary focus of labor organizing. Where growers sometimes used fairly decent housing to buy labor peace among some factions of the farm-working class (as with Miller & Lux's permanent employees), and where they relied on an oversupply of temporary labor as the primary means of such temporary labor's reproduction (not caring much if any *particular* worker returned to work each day, just as long as *some* worker did), workers saw horrid housing conditions as a price they continually had to pay at the hand of greedy capital. This contradiction came to a deadly head in the Wheatland hops pickers' "riot" of 1913, in which a sheriff's deputy waded into a peaceful labor rally protesting conditions on the Durst Brothers' hops ranch and shot his gun in the air. In the ensuing melee, four people were killed and numerous others injured. The riot quickly became a cause célèbre in both labor and bourgeois circles. For the newly formed CCIH, it became a significant challenge that required direct intervention into agriculture's landscape of labor reproduction.* CCIH's first executive director, Carleton Parker, was deluded when he argued that the horrible conditions in most labor camps were "a relic of early California days when our people were good naturedly willing to put up with almost any housing conditions." But he was perhaps on firmer grounds, in the wake of Wheatland, in arguing that "employers must be shown that it is essential that living conditions among their employees be improved, not only in fulfillment of their obligations to society in general, but also in order to protect and promote their own welfare and interests. . . . They must learn that unbearable living conditions inoculate the minds of otherwise peaceful workers with germs of bitterness and violence . . . giving agitators a fruitful field wherein to sow the seeds of revolt and preach the doctrines of sabotage." Improved conditions, in other words, were a means of class control.[8]

CCIH thus made it its mission to show growers how to improve housing (often with heavy subsidies) while also assuring a flexible and abundant labor

* CCIH had been created to confront the expected problems of immigration in California attendant upon the opening of the Panama Canal. With the Wheatland riot it was charged with investigating and reforming labor conditions in the farm districts of the state. It became the primary state-level agency in charge of labor camp inspections, and worked closely, if rarely comfortably, with growers to improve conditions in the fields and camps. Wood, "California Commission."

supply. CCIH produced plans for improved mess halls and pit toilets, built model camps (including in Wheatland), and, especially, inspected private camps. In its first years it inspected camps by sending college students undercover as hoboes; these investigators found that of 308 camps inspected, 268 (87%) were in violation of the Labor Camp Sanitation Act (which had been passed the same time CCIH was created), 137 (45% of the total) seriously so. The improvement of camp conditions was imperative. Better camps, CCIH averred, would lead to "an increase in the willingness and efficiency of labor," and eliminate the "petty strikes and a labor force continually quitting." Better camp and field conditions would safeguard farmers' profits by eliminating the "'soldiering' of discontented workers."[9]

CCIH had some success in the years before and during World War I (especially as that war sopped up a little of the excess labor growers had come to rely on), success shaped by the dual pressure of the well-connected Progressives who staffed the commission and the agitation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), who had gained not a little power and not a little prestige among migratory workers in the wake of the Wheatland riot. But as the war ended, the IWW was repressed, a general deflation set in (especially in farm commodities), and political enemies, including many growers, successfully scaled back the power and influence of the CCIH; camp conditions rapidly deteriorated across the agricultural districts of the state.[10]

In the wake of World War I, and in response to changed patterns of immigration instigated by new quotas on European immigration implemented in the 1920s, growers increasingly turned to Mexican workers for their harvest needs. Sometimes farmers could be quite clear as to why: "We want Mexicans because we can treat them as we cannot treat any other living men. . . . We can control them at night behind bolted gates, within a stockade eight feet high, surmounted by barbed wire. . . . We make them work under armed guards in the field." CCIH advised growers on how to build camps suitable for Mexican workers, even as it opposed unrestricted immigration from Mexico. Though, according to CCIH, Mexican immigrants inevitably brought disease and typically were "of low mentality," there was still room for reform and improvement in the character and quality of Mexican workers. Such improvement was dependent on environmental improvement, on improved labor camp conditions. After CCIH was able to convince the Guasti Company near Fontana to build a new model labor camp for its Mexican workers (with much subsidy from the commission), one of its agents crowed: "It is worth a trip to Guasti just to see how some of the Mexican families can be elevated. . . . The kitchens of this new camp are piped for gas. The Guasti Company sells gas to the occupants for so

much a month same as installment houses. I assure you that it was a pleasure for me to look into these Mexican kitchens and see the Mexican women instead of being smoked out with an old Dutch oven, standing by gas stoves like noble Anglo Saxons." Many growers disagreed that such nobility was possible. The manager of the S. A. Gerard camps in the Imperial Valley, for example, was adamant that he should not be required to improve camp conditions. When the CCIH brought charges under the Labor Camp Sanitation Act against the company, the judge dismissed the charges, saying, "Mexicans in these camps would not use the conveniences provided them" and that CCIH "should not expect the farmers to live up to the requirements of the camp pamphlet here in the Imperial Valley."[11]

The judge, and the growers who thought like him, were quickly confronted by a mass mobilization of Mexican workers in 1928, leading to the intense wave of strikes that marked the agricultural regions of the state in 1933 and 1934, strikes in which the housing question was always central. Labor camps were, in fact, a central weapon in the battles of this period, as growers evicted striking workers, strikers' camps became centers of organizing, growers learned to move camps well away from public highways (and thus organizers), and, every so often, despite a greatly weakened, and often quite compromised DIH,* improved conditions were used to dampen down unrest. Instead of protecting workers' rights, the Labor Camp Sanitation Act became a tool to use against them. For example, when pea pickers in the Imperial Valley struck in early 1934, growers kicked workers and their families out of company camps. Striking pickers created their own camp near Calipatria that housed some 2,000 residents in 225 tents and makeshift shelters. More were living in a second camp a few miles away. Having learned from the massive cotton strike in the San Joaquin the previous fall, where the strikers' encampment became a primary source of solidarity and power for the strikers, growers in the Imperial engineered—with the active connivance of the DIH and the county health officer—their forced dispersal, due to presumed violations of the Labor Camp Sanitation Act. CCIH/DIH almost never shut down growers' camps when the act was violated; at a time of a strike they did not hesitate long before doing so in the case of strikers. Without a base of operations—without a camp in which striking workers could live and from which they could organize their pickets—the strike was quickly crushed.[12]

Back up north, Alameda County District Attorney Earl Warren feared the violent confrontations that marked the San Joaquin and Imperial strikes would

* CCIH was reorganized and incorporated as the DIH within the DIR in 1927, and much of its Progressive orientation and ferment was diluted.

hit his patch. He worked carefully, therefore, with DIH to create the Alameda Plan. Among its provisions was a ban on assemblies, parades, and pickets if their purpose was to induce workers to put down their tools (all other parades and assemblies required a permit vouched for in writing by "reputable residents" of the county). The plan also called for the hiring of local workers first (under the theory that strikes were the work of "outside agitators"). But the heart of the plan was moving labor camps off the main roads and deep into private property, where organizers would have no access to workers. Warren gave DIH agents the authority to move or change the layout of camps, even if doing so was against a farmer's wishes. For their part, DIH inspectors encouraged growers to guard the entrances of their camps "against encroachment by disturbers." Such moves, according to the DIH's Edward Brown, permitted "real workers" to continue working even if "strikers were imported from other districts to give the appearance of a strike." The Alameda Plan was diffused across the state in the ensuing harvests, and District Attorney Warren pronounced himself pleased with its efficacy in dampening labor unrest.[13]

The Alameda Plan was aided by a mass deportation—"repatriation," it was called—of Mexicans (many of them, in fact, Mexican American) in the wake of these upheavals. As white Dust Bowl migrants began replacing Mexican workers in the state, the housing question arose anew. If, as Harry Drobish of the State Relief Administration argued, the nature of crop plantings compelled labor mobility, and if, now, as growers feared, the incoming white workers were "not tractable labor," as they often thought Mexican workers were, if, that is, these new workers "being American citizens, . . . are going to demand the so called American standard of living" (as the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce's George Clements put it), then reformers like Drobish and the University of California's Paul Taylor (who had investigated the great cotton strike of 1933 with his protégé, Clark Kerr) thought increased government intervention into the development and control of labor camps was imperative. Government-run camps were also imperative, many reformers thought, because during the cotton strike, the strikers' encampment had become such a powerful center of organizing. Taylor and Drobish worried that both growers' private camps and strikers' encampments contributed to the violence of the strikes in the fields. Independent, government-run "good camps" would be "conducive to better industrial relations," according to Drobish.[14]

They would also address an immediate need: Hoovervilles were springing up around the state as migrant Dust Bowlers looked for work. Conditions were often terrible in these new encampments, especially since the DIH was power-

less to abate conditions: squatter camps were neither labor camps nor official auto camps, the two kinds of camp it had legal authority over. Government-run camps would assure decent conditions—orderly tent platforms, garbage disposal, flush toilets, shower rooms, laundry facilities, recreation areas—as well as opportunities for some self-governance and the exercise of civil liberties often denied in grower camps. The program for government-run camps was soon taken over by the federal Resettlement Administration, renamed the FSA in 1937. By 1940, the FSA in California had built or approved twelve permanent camps, three mobile camps (which could be quickly set up or taken down in different places around the state), twelve labor home sites (often adjacent to the camps), and various relief offices and health clinics. The State Relief Administration also built another set of buildings and camps, mostly in nonfarming areas (e.g., Oakland, San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, a hospital ground in Los Angeles), which by the beginning of the war had been declared surplus. These were the ones transferred to the FPC.[15]

The State Relief Administration, the FSA, and the DIH (especially after Carey McWilliams assumed leadership) all saw the camps as an intervention in the landscape that would dampen down the violent strife that marked farm labor relations in California not only during the Depression, but throughout its history.* They saw the camps as a means of providing workers with the kind of housing they were due, often (though not always) agreeing with farmers that the provision of housing for temporary workers was unaffordable, at least as California agriculture was currently set up. At the same time, advocates also indeed saw them as sites where worker organizing would at least be possible, and where civil liberties would be protected in ways they were not in the wider agricultural landscape. The federal Resettlement Agency (and later the FSA) was clear that "camps are essentially homesites, and the families who live there are entitled to free enjoyment of legal rights, privileges and civil liberties the same as all persons." It therefore argued that the "camps are not places of general assemblage or commerce" and so are open to "outsiders with special interests or ideas to promote only upon the specific invitation of the camp population" and in accordance with general camp policy. "Nothing in this policy," it held, "shall be construed to impair the legal right of the camp population to orga-

* Representatives of labor, including radical ones, often agreed on this point. See, for example, the comments of J. B. Nathan, of the Committee of the Federation of Agricultural, Packing, and Cannery Workers, Conference on Housing of Migratory Agricultural Laborers, November 18, 1935, Santa Cruz, California, LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 62, Exhibit 9577–D, 22615.

nize or join a union . . . and to strike if they so choose." By 1938, in fact, John Steinbeck could extol the camps "as experiments in natural and democratic self-government." Union organizing was indeed conducted in many federal camps, and the camps proved to be of material value during the strikes in 1938 and 1939, even if Okie workers' attitudes toward unions were quite complex.[16]

The FSA camps represented improved, safe, sanitary housing for workers, and they provided a degree of autonomy for white workers. They also "actually represented an indirect subsidy to farm employers whose responsibility to provide either decent housing or wages high enough to support a decent standard of living was relieved as long as the federal government was willing to foot the bill for housing thousands of farmworkers," as labor historian Cletus Daniel summarized. But because they allowed workers some degree of autonomy, because they provided workers with a degree of dignity, and because they created some latitude for organizing, growers saw them as a threat to their ability to totally dominate the labor supply. Influential members of the Associated Farmers, the State Chamber of Commerce, and others worked vigorously in Washington, Sacramento, and up and down the state to wrest control of the federally subsidized camps, and to hand them over to growers associations or friendly local governments. Growers were direct: because federally controlled camps would undoubtedly "be operated by Federal appointees favoring the communistic viewpoint," declared the manager of the 4,500-acre El Solyo Ranch in Stanislaus County, "it is our belief that no Federal aid should be accepted for the building of such camps unless the camps may be locally operated and controlled by the farmers operating in the district following construction." The Chamber of Commerce asserted that government-funded camps had to be small (two hundred to three hundred people), located on private property, policed to assure that harvest hands would only stay during the season and not become permanent residents, and supervised "by a camp manager, under the control of individual grower or committee of grower."[17]

The work of the FPC would go a long way toward this dream of state-subsidized housing under the total control of growers associations, while simultaneously undercutting the reformist gains made by the FSA camp program.

Constructing a Wartime Labor Landscape

By September 1, 1943—that is, a little more than two months after officially coming into business—the FPC had established 67 "state-owned or controlled labor camps in 26 counties and housing 16,000 workers." It housed another 4,000 workers in 6 camps received from the federal government as it aban-

doned its guayule rubber production project in the state.* The FPC provided buildings, equipment, or cash assistance to private operators of camps housing another 10,000.† This was not quite the 40,000 workers FPC promised to house in its first season, but it was still a massive and impressive undertaking. And it was one without which, according to many growers, both harvests and workers would have been threatened. As one citrus farmer in Visalia reported to Governor Warren, with the passage of the Food and Fiber Act, the "farmers of Tulare County promptly applied" its advantages "to local conditions":

> As a result of their [FPC's] cooperation twelve (12) new Labor Camps with a capacity of well over four thousand (4,000) people have been established throughout the County. Aside from this, many individual farmers have secured badly needed housing units. Without this development it would have been impossible to care for imported workers. The importation of Mexican Nationals through various agencies has balanced the labor supply and insured the harvest of essential War Crops. . . . While the farmers of Tulare County have spent well over $100,000 in cash, plus days of untiring effort to complete these camps, they have constantly enjoyed the helpful assistance of the Farm Production Council. The experience of obtaining action, *without* the tiresome job of untangling red tape, has in my estimation stimulated a great deal of confidence in the Food and Fiber Act. . . . Securing suitable housing was the first and most important job. This solved the basic problem. Without such equipment very little could have been done. . . . Then to insure the supply of workers they [FPC] contracted for a large pool of Mexican Nationals. No farmer was too small or too large to enjoy the benefit of this supply. Permanent Camps and Mobile Camps were established almost over night. Camp equipment came from everywhere. How all of it was acquired is still a mystery to me. . . . Camp operation was worked out and many labor supply centers are being operated for the benefit of agriculture. The money spent by the farmers themselves, plus the State's contribution is of little consequence compared to the value of the accomplishment. I am convinced that Agriculture in Tulare County can now continue to [meet] the demands for production with a new feeling of security that labor will be available to harvest their crops.[18]

* Guayule is a resinous shrub the federal government, working with major rubber corporations like Goodyear, experimented with growing during World War II, when rubber supplies in the Philippines and Asia were inaccessible.

† Typical purchases of the FPC for redistribution to farmers included mattresses, plumbing supplies and equipment, lumber, kitchen equipment, refrigerators, roofing paper, oil for furnaces, and so forth. The FPC frequently paid the costs of cleaning and sterilizing mattresses, linen, and blankets, refurbishing equipment, and the like. See FPC, minutes of meeting, September 14, 1944, Warren Papers, FPC, File 731.

A year later—by which time William Parker had resigned as director to be replaced by the venerable R. L. Adams*—FPC controlled camps, or provided financial as well as materiel and construction aid to farmers for private camps, that housed another 38,000 workers.[19]

The process of constructing camps and aiding growers associations could be complex. When growers' orders for Mexican Nationals were not completely met in the 1944 season, the FPC turned to the army in hopes of securing POW labor.† The army developed a standing policy that POWs would be deployed to farmers if the latter would front four thousand dollars to offset the cost of a Corp of Civil Engineers–built stockade around the camp in which they were to be housed. POWs would be employed at a cost to farmers of $4.00 a day, from which $1.67 would be deducted to reimburse the growers for the cost of the stockade. In San Bernardino County, the army wanted to use the surplus Camp Ayers (which was also one of the FPC's depots) for this purpose, but the growers there, who wanted laborers, were not sure they wanted German POWs, given that they would have to front these construction costs and because it might cut into their request for Mexican workers, whom they saw as more biddable: POWs, after all, were governed by rules of treatment perhaps even more stringent than those of the international agreement governing the importation of Mexican workers. The incentive to work was minimal, and growers complained that German POWs "on average produce about one-third of the work of the average farm worker"‡ and "that their work demonstrates the slow-up in its worst form."[20]

* Parker resigned under a cloud of suspicion, accused of taking kickbacks from suppliers. While he seems never to have been found guilty of this, one of his subordinates was (indeed, Parker was eventually rehabilitated by Governor Warren and appointed to another state position in January 1944). Such corruption in the ranks of bracero-affiliated institutions was hardly unusual over the course of the program. R. L. Adams was a professor of farm management on leave from the University of California. He was the author of the influential *Farm Management* and numerous pamphlets on the business of farming. On Parker's resignation, see Sweigert memos, July 7 and July 11, 1944, Warren Papers, FPC, File 730; editorial, *Hayward Review*, July 8, 1944; "Hoyt Interviews Witnesses in Vollman Payoff Probe," *Oakland Tribune*, June 16, 1944; "Vollman Probe Gets Bid Data," *Oakland Tribune*, June 30, 1944; "Warren Appoints Parker as Head of State Farms," *Modesto Bee*, January 6, 1944. On Adams, see Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 103–4; Henderson, *California*, 91–97; "Professor Heads Council," *Fresno Bee*, July 27, 1944; "Adams Assumes Council Duties," *Oakland Tribune*, July 28, 1944.

† Across the United States the number of POWs employed in agriculture in 1944 (102,000) greatly outnumbered the number of Mexican Nationals (62,191). There were further suggestions at a U.S. Senate hearing that illegal Mexican workers outnumbered contracted braceros: Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 99, 217, 220.

‡ By March 1, 1945, representatives of the Extension Service were suggesting that POWs were now "performing about 60 per cent of a day's work," and that "their use causes a serious hous-

The FPC found itself caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, housing and deploying POWs, according to one of its staff members, "might jeopardize the Council's position in its efforts to get more Mexicans immediately, if available." On the other hand, a council member argued, "we would be open to criticism if we refused to accommodate a supply of laborers, whatever kind they may be, and that it might appear that we did not actually need workers." Against the wishes of the San Bernardino farmers, the FPC voted to house POWs at Camp Ayers. A deal was struck. The FPC would build the stockade, guard towers, and lights at its expense and growers would reimburse the FPC for these costs over a period of ten weeks (as the growers themselves were gradually reimbursed by the army); the FPC would build the camp and mess facilities with army funds. The camp would be leased to the San Bernardino County Growers Association at the cost of one dollar per year; growers would have control over the camp's operation and administration, though the supervisor would be paid by the FPC. The army would pay the FPC a housing cost of 5¢ per day per prisoner, amounting to about $875 for 10 weeks to slightly offset the cost of camp construction. While the growers may have worried about the tractability of POW labor, in other words, it nonetheless got these workers quite cheap (in essence, $2.33 a day to growers),* as well as a camp, over which it had direct control and for which it paid next to nothing, that would outlast the war. The Camp Ayers project was only one of several similar projects around the state, each amounting to a direct subsidy to growers. During 1945, there were thirty POW camps in agricultural areas of the state (of which sixteen were partially or wholly fitted with FPC-supplied buildings), and another eighteen FPC-operated camps developed exclusively for Mexican National workers.[21]

In order to so rapidly construct the private camps, the FPC-run camps, the mobile camps, the camps for Mexican Nationals, and the POW camps, the FPC constructed three "depots" or supply and construction centers—one in Stockton, another in Fresno, and the third at Camp Ayers. At these depots, the FPC contracted to have thousands of mattresses sterilized every month; received surplus federal goods for redistribution to farmers; stored kitchen equipment and supplies; built tent platforms, mess halls, and latrines that could be rapidly

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ing problem" because of the extra housing needed for guards. FPC, supplement to minutes of meeting, March 1, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732.

* After deductions, bracero wages in California ranged from three dollars to six dollars a day in 1944, according to one study, even as official hourly wages hovered around fifty cents—or five dollars for a ten-hour day before deductions. Ernesto Galarza, "Personal and Confidential Memorandum on Mexican Contract Workers in the United States," typescript, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 8.

deployed to farm districts; and tested materials for suitability (e.g., whether asphalt was an adequate substitute for concrete in constructing tent pads). The FPC, in other words, constructed a landscape, in part stable and rooted to place (as in the depots, POW camps, supply camps, and new private camps), in part highly mobile, as with the "demountable" and mobile camps that could be quickly redeployed from one place to another. It took down surplus Civilian Conservation Corps camps in the foothills and reassembled them in the agricultural valleys. It built large camps for growers associations, renting the facilities to them at below-market costs. It then frequently sold the camps to the associations—or to large individual growers—not at their value (which was always assessed before sale) but at the actual cost the FPC laid out for materiel and equipment (but not labor).* And before March 15, 1945, it deducted from this cost the rents that purchasing associations or farmers had paid. At the same time the FPC rescinded its policy of applying rents to sale prices, it also adopted a policy of significantly reducing rents to farmers during low seasons. Heretofore rents to farmers had been charged on the basis of camp capacity; now they were charged on the basis of actual occupancy. In other words, the FPC assumed for farmers the cost of low occupancy, a subsidy of course not granted to other providers of housing (or most other industries, which had to pay workers enough to afford housing of their own), even when that housing served essential war workers, like shipbuilders.[22]

In the winter of 1945, recognizing the inconstancy of demand, the FPC began building camps on spec rather than in response to definite orders or established need. Worried that "there may be considerable need for additional housing of farm workers in the months ahead," in January the FPC authorized spending thirty thousand dollars to construct two hundred "tent type units"—wooden platform, partial wood sides and rear, canvas top and front, with a heating stove. Three weeks later, it approved another thirty thousand dollars to build three additional camps (mess hall and kitchen, storage rooms, showers, latrines, officers quarters, recreation halls, enclosed garbage building), plus twenty-six thousand dollars to furnish them, and to provide tents and tent platforms because "in all probability, the Council will be requested by growers to furnish equipment and installations required in the establishment of a number of labor

* Sometimes growers found it lucrative to *not* buy as until July 1945 there was no policy against their renting buildings and materiel from the FPC and rerenting them to workers at a higher rate than that charged by the council. This practice is similar to growers associations' frequent skimming of meal money from braceros—charging the full amount allowed by contract but providing food worth considerably less—that became common after the war. FPC, minutes of meeting, July 12, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733.

camps, located throughout the State, to house Mexican nationals and prisoners of war, and necessary U.S. Army personnel." The purchase of the materiel for these camps and facilities would be in addition to the materiel already on hand, which was sufficient "to set up eight large camps, having capacity of 300 men" each. By early April, the FPC had appropriated "$106,000 for additional housing, not including borrowed tents and other facilities." This new housing would help meet the "firm orders . . . already in for *twenty* camps over and above the 1944 requirements, or for another 6000 workers." These camps would complement the FPC's current supply of "2,129 buildings for the housing and boarding of workers at 518 locations in 26 counties." They would also complement the WFA's own stock of 18 permanent camps and 10 or 11 mobile camps—built for growers at a heavy subsidy.* And they would be in addition to both the 200 trailers Imperial Valley growers were seeking to purchase in Texas with a $10,000 interest-free loan from the FPC and the $51,878.85 appropriated for the purchase of prefab "mobile building units" from a Seattle firm.†[23]

The rapid construction and deployment of camps was more pressing than ever, according to the FPC, since "the labor supply in 1945 promises to be tighter than in 1944." The FPC was fully aware that California growers routinely inflated their estimates of labor need, and particularly their requests for braceros, that they were "inclined to overestimate their actual needs," as a representative of the Extension Service put it. They had placed orders for 72,000 Mexican Nationals in 1945, but the "Extension Service estimates that 54,000 workers would actually fill the requirements" of California growers. Even so, the need for a new, expanded landscape of labor camps was imperative, the FPC averred, if workers—whatever their eventual numbers—were to be efficiently used. A primary problem was that harvest workers were too often "frozen," in the words of an official of the Extension Service. Already-contracted braceros were frequently

* "It is also required that grower-members of an association planning to draw workers from such a [WFA] camp be required to meet 60 per cent of the cost of setting up such a camp, the Office of Labor taking care of 40 per cent." Growers were often not charged rent for WFA and for State Relief Agency camps FPC operated, but often had to pay a nominal rental charge for other FPC camps, creating a fair amount of friction between growers and the FPC. Adams to Warren, February 23, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732; FPC minutes of meetings, July 12, September 13, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733.

† The FPC worked closely with the Imperial Valley growers to secure through the area Congress member a forty-thousand-dollar appropriation from the federal government to buy the Texas trailers; the FPC loan was designed as bridge money. The Seattle housing proved to be a major headache for the FPC; the contracted firm could not get all the materiel it needed and the order had to be cut back; when the units that were built arrived in California, they did not meet the contracted specifications.

"'frozen' in the hands of their present employers for the season," and other workers were frozen in place, by a lack of camp facilities. What was needed were "efforts to keep some fluidity in the program." Indeed, the whole point of the Mexican importation program, according to the FPC, was to provide "a fluid labor supply of farm labor which was shifted to meet extreme shortages as they developed."* And the whole point of the FPC camp program was to "attain greater fluidity in [the] distribution" of braceros and other farm workers by building the necessary infrastructure of that fluidity.[24]

This fluidity was of a certain kind. Throughout the harvest of 1944 and the winter of 1945, growers, the Extension Service, and the FPC complained of braceros going "AWOL"—jumping their contracts, often to work for farmers paying higher wages. The term is redolent of how growers saw their workers: a labor power tied directly to them, over whom they had the power to control movement. Even so, by August 1945, there were some seven thousand braceros "AWOL" from California farmers. "Poaching" of workers by farmers willing to pay higher wages also remained a problem, just as it had in the earliest days of the program. Equally, a "problem in the operation of the program," according to FPC director R. L. Adams and the WFA's William Anglim, "has been [encouraging] the movement of workers from high paying crops, such as peaches, prunes, grapes, and tomatoes, to low average daily crops such as cotton" as that harvest came due. Growers were asked to refrain from hiring Mexican National workers who left their contracted jobs for work in higher-wage crops. The penalty—for workers—was indenture: the Office of Labor of the WFA adopted a policy in 1945 of returning workers who skipped their contracts to their original employer under penalty of repatriation. The effect of this, of course, was to hold down wages, whatever the labor market pressures.† As one farmer candidly remarked, "if it had not been for the Mexican Nationals, local Mexican pickers would be demanding and getting a dollar an hour for field work and packing instead of seventy cents."[25]

Farm organizations, like the CFBF, understood the importance of the FPC's labor camp construction program as it worked in conjunction with the WFA's

* Accordingly, various farm organizations in California began a campaign to rewrite the terms of the bracero contracts so "that in emergencies a part of the working force can be withdrawn from the employer for work in other areas," whatever the wishes of the workers (or employer) might be. Supplement to minutes of March 1, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732.

† As of June 1945, "a little less than 7%" of the braceros contracted to California growers were "now missing. Most of these workers are in agriculture and working for employers who are employing other contract Mexicans"—largely in higher-wage crops. The WFA was thus redoubling its efforts to return them to their original growers. FPC, minutes of meeting, June 14, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732.

policy of trying to assure that braceros remained with the growers or associations they were originally contracted to. It was "a very stabilizing factor on the whole farm labor program," a Post War Labor Committee of the CFBF declared at a meeting on October 10, 1945, as it prepared to lobby the legislature for the continuance of the FPC now that the war had ended.* The CFBF appreciated the FPC largely because of its policy of building camps *for growers*—housing in growers' private camps or camps controlled by and eventually sold to growers associations that pooled labor. This practice contrasted with that of the FSA and to an extent the WFA, which built camps *for workers*. About one-fifth of the 63,342 Mexican National workers in the United States on August 1, 1944, lived in WFA camps; an unknown number of domestic workers also lived in such camps.† At its 1945 Annual Meeting, the CFBF therefore renewed its call for all federal camps to be handed over directly to growers associations and labor bureaus, not transferred to the state or another public agency. With control over the camps, growers hoped to take even fuller control over braceros and other workers.‡ One reason the FPC was so favored by growers, it is clear, was

* This declaration represents something of a change of heart of the CFBF. A year before, the CFBF's president, Ray Wiser, had argued to the governor's personal secretary that the FPC should be "tapered down to a point where it can be absorbed by the Department of Agriculture in the next biennium." Wiser particularly wanted to assure that the labor camp program be moved into Agriculture rather than the purview of "any special agency," a position in line with the CFBF's desire that "no permanent farm agency be created in the state" outside the control of the Department of Agriculture. Wiser said that the Grange and Farmers Union agreed on this point, and that they had found support from the auditor of the Legislative Budget Committee, who was concerned about duplication of functions. The FPC itself agreed that it should continue to exist "to render service to growers as long as the emergency exists and when the emergency has ended that this organization be liquidated." It therefore resolved to lobby for its own continuance at least through the end of 1946. The FPC was eventually liquidated in 1947. MacGregor to Warren, September 6, 1944; Scroggins to Warren, November 10, 1944, both in Warren Papers, FPC, File 731; FPC, minutes of meetings, September 13 and October 14, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733.

† In California, the percentage of domestic workers in federal camps would have been much lower had it not been for the efforts of the FPC, whose crash program of bracero camp building "freed our camps for the continued housing of domestic workers who continued in agriculture because the only housing available for them was located in agricultural areas," in the words of one longtime FSA/WFA employee. "Subject Matter for Presentation to the Regular Staff Meeting to Be Held on March 5, 1946," Taylor Papers, Box 40, File 33.

‡ From the time the camps were first created, growers organizations agitated to have them closed or handed over to grower groups. By 1951, growers would be successful in gaining control of the federal camps, but the road would be long and twisty, and run through (often grower-controlled) county public housing authorities rather than growers associations. This road will be mapped in chapter 4.

precisely because through its work they could better cement their control over labor power, while minimizing their direct costs for its procurement.*[26]

But there was another reason. Wittingly or unwittingly, the FPC was engaged in remaking the landscape such that braceros would henceforth be *necessary* for farm work in California and favored over domestic workers. Almost all the housing FPC built and deployed was designed for single men, almost none for families.† Though early in its life the FPC built subsidized child care facilities to help women workers, its attempts to encourage farmers to provide family housing were half-hearted at best. Warning of a dire shortage of workers for the 1945 harvest, the FPC worked with others to advocate for importation programs targeting the Philippines, for the migration of African Americans from Texas, and for the fuller use of POWs, but limited itself to a single, passive line concerning family labor in letters to farmers—"attention to providing housing for family labor, not otherwise available, has merit"—and suggesting in private that it ought "to assist and encourage farmers to provide family-type housing." But there is no indication in the records of the organization that it ever did in fact provide such assistance.[27]

Indeed, by the end of 1945, it had adopted a policy that "housing in [FPC] camps shall be utilized for unattached men in agriculture not for families. This condition is imposed because of a need to make fullest utilization of all facilities in view of the fact that total housing is short of total requirements, thus insuring proper housing for the maximum number of workers." The very shape of FPC-built housing—mostly bunkhouses and multibunk tents—was seen to preclude their efficient use by families. Between 75 and 87 percent of the farm labor in

* In April 1945, growers in California expended $121,150 on building camps or bringing labor camps up to code after they had been inspected by DIH. It is not clear how much of this work was subsidized by the FPC, but it is clear that the subsidy was considerable. In the years 1943–44, $2,511,055 was expended on construction and improvement of all agricultural and railroad labor camps in the state. To put this in context, agents for the federal government estimated that it had "about $15,000,000 invested in the twenty-seven camps" it operated in 1947 and that annual operations cost about $1,000,000. Edward Brown, "Monthly Report—Labor Camps, Auto Courts and Resorts"; Division of Housing, *Biennial Report, 1943–1944*, both in Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2294; Dean to Warren, November 24, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716.

† The agricultural labor pool was always predominantly male, but women and families made up a significant portion of it. In 1943–44, DIH inspected 6,269 camps housing 162,956 people, of which 13 percent were women and 17 percent children. These numbers are skewed, however, by the fact that DIH devoted considerable resources to inspecting camps housing Mexican Nationals in the wake of an agreement with the WFA. Division of Housing, *Biennial Report*, Anglim to Koetitz, December 14, 1944, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2293.

California at this time was of "the normal type"—domestic workers of all races, single and in families—and only the remainder was braceros, prisoners, POWs, and "volunteers" (students, housewives, etc.). But it was this remainder, especially the braceros, that constituted the "fluid" sector, and it was for them the wartime landscape was being built. For it was these latter, as we will see in the following chapter, who could most easily be made to resemble capital's dream that labor is only ever *labor power*—fully a factor in production, able to be deployed like any other factor (capital, land, machinery)—and not so much a human being with a will and a personality.[28]

Reproduction

Housing Labor Power

THE "MAINTENANCE AND REPRODUCTION OF the working class is, and ever must be, a necessary condition of the reproduction of capital," Marx argued, but that is step two. First comes the development and reproduction of *labor power*. Labor power is labor in its commodity form. Labor power is the ability to do work (i.e., its use value), rather than doing work itself. That ability to do work must present itself in the market as a commodity for sale. There is little incentive for workers to do so unless they either have no other option (they possess no other means of subsistence), or the option of selling their labor power—realizing its exchange value—is somehow more attractive than whatever other options they may have. The world-historical transformation at the root of capitalism, therefore, was the mass dispossession of people from the land and their means of production. The throngs of *aspirantes* gathered outside the Mexican National Stadium in the early years of the bracero program, or sleeping in the parks outside the vetting center in Hermosillo or other Mexican cities in later years, are proof, as if any is needed, that this process of dispossession, this making of labor into labor power is ongoing; it did not end with the end of the era of "so-called primitive accumulation."[1]

The problem with the commodity labor power is that it is not quite like other commodities. Once other commodities are sold, their use-values are totally the property of the purchaser. They are fully alienated from their seller. But with labor power that kind of alienation is pretty much impossible. The commodity labor power *resides* in the body of the laborer; it cannot be divorced from it. Each day it must be restored—reproduced—ready to be sold again. Laboring bodies, then, "are themselves obstacles to capitalism," as George Henderson (once again) makes so clear. Like the crops, "workers are sites of biological processes and energy flows for which capital has only partial solutions (e.g. robotics). . . . Bodies persist." And if they don't then they die and their labor power dies with them. Control over labor power—the exercise of capital power—becomes paramount. Marx is at least partially wrong when he says that the reproduction of labor power can be "safely left to the labourer's instinct of self-preservation." Rather, as Henderson shows, the wage intervenes as a (partial) capitalist solution to the capitalist problem of labor-power reproduction.

As he pithily puts it, "That they are *waged* bodies is a capitalist solution," even as the fact they are "waged *bodies*" remains "a capitalist problem."[2]

But what is the wage? It's the price of labor power (exchange value realized). It is also a crucial, struggled-over cultural marker of the worth of labor power, as Geoff Mann details so brilliantly. But neither price nor worth is precisely the same thing as *value*, and as a commodity, labor possesses not only use value and exchange value but also value. The value of any commodity is the total of all the values (which take the form of means of production and raw materials) that go into its making, plus new labor expended on its manufacture. This is true of labor power, too. The value of labor power, of whatever quality, is the sum total of all the values that have made it: from food and shelter to education and training. Even more, since the value of labor power is embodied in a living being, the value of labor power must somehow encapsulate the values that *will* go into that body's making, even after it has reached the end of its useful working life. The vital thing about the commodity of labor power, of course, is the sheer amount of labor and stuff (from food and shelter, to education and training) that is *not*, at least primarily, itself purchased as a commodity, but is instead provided *gratis* (from the perspective of capital at least): the practices of mothering and housework, of community life and companionship, or of course, of the physical act of sex, which literally reproduces bodies (that may or may not end up being defined *as* the embodiment of labor power). While it is true, then, that the value of labor power can be "practically known" as Marx says and as all manner of cost-of-living indexes and state-defined poverty-lines make clear, such a practical knowledge comes at the cost of minimizing the importance of all the unwaged work that goes into reproducing labor power. It is equally true that the value of labor power incorporates what Marx too laconically called a "historical and moral element": the *kind* of shelter, the *degree* of education, or the *forms* of mothering and community life—to say nothing of the real material needs of different kinds of workers (e.g., cars or access to other kinds of transportation for migrant workers)—are all the products not of nature but of struggle and historical development. Finally, it is also therefore equally true that the *price* of labor power—one of the phenomenal forms struggle takes—may not, directly or even over the long haul, truly reflect the real *value* of labor power, even though it must always tend (over the long haul) toward approximating it (to say nothing of what workers know to be its *worth*).[3]

Of course, it is usually in the interest of any individual capitalist to drive down the cost of labor as much as possible, to find some way to pay it below, and certainly at no more than, its value. This is contradictory, since workers themselves must be the primary market for all the commodities they produce.

If wages drop too low, crisis results. *Managing* this crisis is a primary task of the capitalist class. One way to manage it is to find ways to socialize the costs of the reproduction of labor power (as, for example, with various Keynesian public or subsidized housing schemes); another is to assure continued access to labor and stuff given by workers, their families, and communities to capital *gratis* (the desire for which can run smack into the capitalist counterpressure to turn everything, like child care or even mother's milk, into a commodity and therefore capable of producing and realizing surplus value); a third is to leverage local and global uneven development to secure a source of labor reproduced under "historical and moral" conditions very different from—much cheaper than—those where it is deployed. A fourth, rather different strategy, is to not rely on the reproduction of labor power at all, but to assume that as it wears out—backs are broken, fingers are severed, workers waste away and die, or workers just wander away in search of greener pastures—it can be *replaced* instead with new, fresh workers ready to sell their labor power as cheaply or cheaper.[4]

As the bracero program was cemented into place in California as World War II came to a close, growers relied on a combination of all four of these strategies, though their implementation was never easy. The labor camp programs of the FPC were in part an effort at the first strategy for reproducing labor power; its constant advocacy of the continuation of the Mexican National program, and its supplementation by importation of male workers from Puerto Rico, Central America, the Philippines, the Cotton Belt of the American South, and elsewhere was an attempt at the third. Both relied on the continued operation of the second (Marx's "instinct for self-preservation"). Behind them all was a tacit assumption that the fourth would always be at work, that there would *always* be fresh workers available, even if it was not always easy getting them.

The labor camp construction program sat at the heart of these strategies. Housing is a primary cost in the reproduction of labor power, a primary determinant of its value; the price of labor power—wages—should be sufficient in capitalism to purchase housing of a quality good enough to assure its reproduction. In the California fields it rarely was. And neither did growers consistently see it as their duty to otherwise provide housing of appropriate quality (often hoping labor power reproduction strategy four would make such provision superfluous). The never vanquished need for shelter—for housing—is a frank admission that labor power is embodied. It is just as frank an admission that those bodies can be, and are, highly differentiated. Housing can be built that will presumably attract certain *kinds* of labor and not others. In the 1920s, CCIH was convinced that if it cut in half old bunkhouses built for Chinese workers, a sufficient quantity of better-quality white laborers would be attracted, and

that in model cement homes Mexican women could be turned into close approximations of "noble Anglo-Saxons." It thus expended a great deal of energy, and money, trying to get growers to upgrade their housing. As wave upon wave of fresh workers (young Filipino men, Mexican migrants, Dust Bowl refugees) washed over the state, rarely did it succeed.[5]

Of course, the CCIH ideology gives itself away: differentiated bodies have differentiated needs, differentiated desires, individual and collective wills. People are not *just* labor power, they are not *only* a factor of production; indeed, they often act like anything but. Housing in the fields of California—stockades (which do not disappear when the POWs finally go home), model homes, federal camps, campaigns against ditch-bank camps—was an intervention into the geography of reproduction not only at the level of cost or value, but also at the level of control, and things on the land, the morphology of landscape, resulted.

People persist. This is definitely a capitalist problem. Capitalists, including especially growers whose production process is so discontinuous, want labor power; they want a factor of production. What they get are people. A fought-over, discontinuous, often iniquitous landscape of labor camps is a very specific capitalist solution to this problem that labor power and the people that comprise it cannot be divorced.

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CHAPTER THREE

The Dream of Labor Power

Fluid Labor and the Solid Landscape

The California farmer, like other American farmers, is one of the principal audiences for the physiocratic legend. No matter whether he travels by private plane, employs a chauffeur, ships by air express, and owns a produce market or two in Baltimore and New York, he is insistently a farmer engaged in society's most useful and necessary enterprise, and entitled to the special consideration which the dignity of his occupation commands. He regards himself as a natural agent of the forces of freedom, which he is more likely to define as freedom to raise, harvest, and market his crop than as freedom of speech and assembly for those whose stake is less than his own. He believes that he has a right as a farmer to an adequate supply of labor. Trade unions he regards as a threat to the exercise of these basic rights.

Lloyd Fisher, *The Harvest Labor Market in California*, 1953

You asked to be reminded to look into the reason for importing 25,000 Mexican Nationals this year when our state is faced with a considerable amount of unemployment among our own people.

M. F. Small, Secretary to the Governor, to Governor Warren, March 25, 1946

THE DREAM OF PERFECT CONTROL of labor power is never far from California growers' minds. Even as he was lobbying the secretary of agriculture for the creation of a farmer-controlled, California-only system of labor importation from Mexico, C. C. Teague was also drawing up incorporation papers for a proposed Sino-American Agency, Inc., whose mission would be "to investigate and bring about the formation by the Government of the United States of America of a Chinese Labor Corps, to be run on semi-military lines, and to be employed for the *duration of the war only*, in relief of this country's severe labor shortages" in everything from agriculture to railroad construction to longshoring to brickmaking "and any other non-technical, outdoor, unskilled *heavy manual labor*." The Sino-American Agency would act as the recruiter for the U.S. government and would run the program. The articles of incorporation provided, in particular, that a "White Establishment" would oversee the Chinese workers, who would be given uniforms and assigned ranks (from captain to corporal) and who would be deployed with the precision and discipline of a military force.[1]

While there is no evidence this agency ever developed any further than Teague's draft incorporation papers, the proposal is nonetheless indicative of how growers (and others) perceive labor power: it is something to be deployed, a factor of production amenable to rationalization, if not exactly like raw materials or means of production, not entirely dissimilar either. Labor power, in other words, presents itself to capital—in this case, a grower like Teague—in the same manner as other commodities that serve as inputs to production: as a problem to be solved, as a problem with its own peculiarities and its own logic.

Teague might, for example, expend considerable energy (and money) seeking out the causes of "premature deterioration of citrus trees" in Southern California, and on the basis of this develop a set of ideas and technological interventions aimed at assuring properly drained orchards. Without such intervention into the nature of commodity production, the quantity and quality of (in this case) lemons suffers.* He might, equally, develop plans for and build a city of four hundred houses on his Limoneira Ranch to be rented to orchard workers, while also fighting unionization, since both, to his eyes, affect the quality and quantity of the fruit the ranch produces. The construction of a company town such as that at Limoneira seeks to do the same thing for lemon growing as does assuring a well-drained orchard. When trees nonetheless prematurely deteriorate, they are chopped down and replaced with new ones. When workers

* He will also, of course, keep close track of the means by which inputs to production, like plant or tree varietals, *become* commodities, such as through new laws allowing for the patenting of life after 1930. Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 64–65.

strike, as they did in 1941, they are tossed out of their homes, forced to fend for themselves, and, indeed, eventually replaced—with braceros.[2]

The creation of something like a Chinese Labor Corps, where, so far as possible, workers would be stripped of their humanity by the "White Establishment," regimented and ordered, their free will and their own interests and passions made as relevant to production as the essential "being-ness" of a beef cow or plow blade, represents a different, not unrelated, tack on the course to the same dream of full control over the production process. Yet another tack is the creation of and constant recourse to a labor oversupply—that reserve army growers nurtured so as to ensure both a high degree of flexibility and, for many tasks within the division of labor, labor *disposability*, wherein the goal was not to assure the reproduction of any one worker but rather that there would always be at hand a ready and willing replacement. It is in this last option that workers come closest to the capitalist ideal of a worker: as *nothing more* than an embodiment of labor power, a *mere* factor of production—as a hired "hand," or in this case "arm" (bracero). Any number of other paths toward the deployment of labor power as a factor of production exist, either as a combination of these sorts of strategies or otherwise, and what marks the California landscape more than anything else is the willingness of growers to try anything to assure workers are there when they are needed—anything, that is, except pay a decent wage.[3]

War's End and the Supply of Labor

When braceros first arrived in Orange County to work in the citrus orchards, the Associated Farmers assured they were housed in fenced camps supervised by "deputy sheriffs, armed with clubs." According to an FSA employee, "visitors are not allowed in some camps." Braceros who complained (or who sought even to live by the terms of their contracts, seeking, for example, to eat meals in town rather than in the camp commissary) were met by "police actions taken without formalities as proscribed by law . . . fines, jail sentences, detention without charge, physical abuse [and] interrogations." When the first FSA overseer of the bracero program in California, Lawrence Hewes, demanded an investigation, organized growers loudly objected and engineered Hewes's removal from his role as chief. (As an information specialist for the FSA put it with some acidity in a letter to the new director of the Division of Interstate and Foreign Labor of the WFA, "Hewes has his weaknesses. He gets snotty with growers who violate their contract with the Government, who seek to re-establish California's traditional anarchy in the labor market, who try to keep wages down and workers subservient to their wishes.")[4]

While such armed encampments might have been extreme, they were not entirely exceptional, and they served a crucial purpose: assuring labor power was *there* when it was needed, especially given braceros' propensity, from the earliest days, to go "AWOL" and seek better pay elsewhere and considering that growers did not always get the total number of braceros they requested. A year after Hewes was upbraided for calling out the practices in Orange County, Ivan Wood, the manager of San Diego Farmers, Inc. (a growers association chartered to deploy braceros), complained that though his organization had "a standing contract with the War Food Administration for the employment of some 500 Mexican Nationals on a year round duration basis," there were only "a little over 400 employed in this area." He complained that San Diego Farmers and other growers associations in Southern California had "not received [their] fair share" of braceros and complained that Northern California growers were being favored by the WFA and Extension Service. His complaints were relayed by the San Diego Farm Bureau to Governor Warren, who asked the FPC to investigate. The Extension Service reported to the FPC that, in fact, San Diego Farmers, Inc. had received a disproportionate share of Mexican Nationals: in August 1944, the organization received 95.6 percent of its requested allotment. The state as a whole, however, had only received 64 percent of its orders for that month. Other months showed similar disparities. The real problem in San Diego was that "for some unknown reason—perhaps lower wages or unsatisfactory work conditions—the loss of workers by San Diego Farmers, Inc. appears to be excessive" and the Extension Service had to assign additional workers to the organization "to compensate for their losses and to try to meet their urgent needs." The Orange County plan was designed to assure specifically that such "excessive" losses—due to lower wages or bad work conditions—did not occur.[5]

Growers, though, were in fact confronted with an even larger specter of loss: the loss of the bracero labor altogether. In December 1944, the U.S. attorney general ruled that Mexican National workers could only remain in the United States for thirty days after the cessation of hostilities. The war ended in August 1945, but no official declaration of cessation was made and a friend of farmers inserted a sentence in a 1946 appropriations bill to continue the program under the terms of the Farm Labor Supply Appropriation Act of 1944, aka PL 229.* PL 229, passed after much lobbying by farm organizations, including testimony in Senate hearings by a representative of the FPC, had made certain significant

* President Harry S. Truman finally declared an official end to the war on December 31, 1946, but by then the USDA had arranged for the waiver of immigration requirements to meet "urgent" labor shortages, particularly in sugar beets. Kirstein, *Anglo over Bracero*, 53.

changes to the operations of the importation program under PL 45. Perhaps the most important was it allowed Mexican National labor to be used in packing, canning, and similar processing work, in addition to field and orchard work. It also allowed appropriated funds to be used for the construction of labor supply centers and for the transportation of domestic workers within states without the approval of county extension agents (PL 45 required Extension approval for the transportation of workers across county lines). PL 229 "remained, almost without change, the basis of the farm-labor supply for the duration of the program," in the words of historian Peter Kirstein.* The passage of PL 229 and the winning of the 1946 appropriation to keep the "emergency" program operating after the end of the war did two things. First, it showed growers that the program could be continually adapted to their own needs, and in a manner that, as with PL 45, increased their power over its operation.† Second, it taught them that the nature of the "emergency" itself was malleable in such a way as to practically guarantee access to cheap labor (now the emergency was not a labor shortage, presumably the whole reason for the wartime program, but a pending food shortage, the meeting of which, many in Congress averred, required the importation of foreign labor, no matter the status of the domestic labor pool).[6]

The shift of emphasis was crucial. Already by 1945, just as the war was ending, and even before the peak harvest season, the FPC was predicting that in 1946 harvest labor demand in the western states was expected to be only 80 percent of what it was in 1945. There were concerns, in fact, of a repeat of the post–World War I deflation and consequent high levels of unemployment. Nonetheless the FPC's R. L. Adams complained that the number of braceros likely to be admitted under the 1946 appropriation—75,000—"isn't enough," especially since, in a wide departure from growers' usual reason for wanting to import

* One significant change was the rescission of statutory approval to use braceros in canneries and packinghouses, though exceptions were frequently made by the managers of the program.

† California growers did not always get their way. In the spring of 1945, for example, they lobbied strenuously for a program of labor importation from the Philippines. The FPC sent a delegation to Washington, which worked closely with members of the state Chamber of Commerce, various growers organizations (such as the powerful Western Growers Association), and the head of the Emergency Farm Labor Project of the Extension Service, to convince the army to release Filipino workers into California hands. The effort came to no avail when General Douglas MacArthur determined that "the situation in the Philippines is such that all available labor will be needed on the islands." Couchman to Adams, May 31, 1945; MacGregor to Warren, May 23, 1945, both in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 713. California growers were rarely deterred by a first no. They resumed pressuring MacArthur and Washington on the issue in July. FPC, minutes of meeting, August 9, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733.

Mexicans (others will not or cannot do the stoop labor required on the farms): "farming calls for experience—and strength—and skill—and knowledge of what to do and how to do it. This experience is not acquired in industrial plants nor on city streets. So if California is to continue to produce anything like its capacity, it will need many more workers acquainted with the demands of agriculture than are normally living on farms or among the unemployed of the cities and towns." While admitting that better housing in the agricultural area would do much to attract domestic workers, the fact was there simply was not enough, and not enough appropriate, housing available. For now, then, according to Adams, bracero labor was a "necessity."[7]

Even as Adams and the FPC were planning for the 1946 importations, and even as they were complaining that the number to be imported was not enough, organized labor, which during the war had largely supported the bracero program, began to demand an end to the importations of Mexican National labor. Unemployed workers in the San Joaquin Valley added their voice, petitioning the governor to say that if labor importation went ahead, domestic workers would likely be thrown onto state relief. And some members of Adams's own FPC likewise privately informed the governor that importation was unnecessary. Frank Shay, the chair of the FPC and a prune grower in Santa Clara, informed the governor's personal secretary that not only was there a labor surplus but there was "a lot of labor coming into the farming area." The U.S. Department of Labor (USDL) simultaneously predicted the number of domestic migratory workers was going to "be considerably larger in 1946 than in any of the war years," a prediction confirmed by the California Division of Housing in May 1946, when it reported that in Kern County (among others), "conditions are similar to those in 1935. . . . A tremendous influx of labor is arriving in the county." Crucially, for many growers, these domestic workers would not be subject to the "extremely restrictive clauses" the "Mexican government is trying to impose" on American farmers as the international agreement was being renegotiated.* Nor, perhaps, would it necessarily require the quality of housing stipulated by that international agreement.[8]

As it turned out, these "extremely restrictive clauses" were bent in the growers' favor. While the new Individual Work Agreement raised the minimum wage from 30¢ to 37¢ per hour, guaranteed workers a biweekly earnings of at least $33.60, provided a subsistence wage for days when work was less than

* In response to discriminatory treatment and bad conditions in many locales, the Mexican government had demanded a renegotiation of the standard work agreement; an amended contract was agreed to on March 20, 1946. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 210–11.

4 hours, and discontinued the 10 percent savings heretofore sent to workers' Mexican bank accounts, negotiations between representatives of the sugar beet industry and the USDA led to the latter assuming "part of the liability for time lost by workers because of poor weather conditions." If there were short, or no, work days because of rain or snow, USDA would reimburse growers for the subsistence wages they had to pay. As the department's official historian of the early bracero program remarked, in a nice understatement, this provision "was of considerable assistance to employers of Mexican farm workers."[9]

Also of considerable assistance was the growing traffic in undocumented workers.* As early as June 1944, the U.S. and Mexican governments had agreed that apprehended illegal entrants to the United States from Mexico could be returned to the border and there contracted *as* legal braceros.† Mexico insisted that all apprehended undocumented workers be returned to the Mexican side of the line; it would not allow them to be "regularized" on the spot in the United States. California growers, especially in the Imperial Valley, took full advantage of this policy. One indicator of the size of the pool of undocumented workers is the number of apprehensions and deportations of illegal entrants. In 1944, 29,176 illegal entrants were deported; in 1945, 69,111. In 1946, even as the federal and state governments were describing the growing oversupply of domestic migrant workers, 101,478 undocumented entrants were deported. The number continued to grow steadily until it peaked in 1954 at more than 1.1 million (see chapter 8) (table 3.1).[10]

Using undocumented workers had many advantages, not least of which was that such workers were in no position to make wage or housing demands.‡ Growers saw them as "good workers"—often better than both domestics and

* In congressional hearings in 1944, the overseer of the WFA, Colonel Philip Bruton, denied that the number of "wetbacks" exceeded the number of legal braceros; but he was probably wrong. In 1947, for example, only 19,632 braceros were recruited into the United States (another 11,699 were recontracted from the previous year); but some 55,000 illegal entrants were recontracted as braceros in Texas alone (circumventing the Mexican ban on the use of braceros in that state). Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 219.

† PL 40, signed on April 28, 1947, contained the "Knowland Amendment," which made the legalizing of illegal entrants as braceros a legitimate part of statutory law.

‡ As with contemporary illegal immigration, the ever-present threat of violence, by *coyotes* and others preying on migrants' desperation and vulnerability, served to undermine worker power. In October 1945, some forty-eight bodies of undocumented migrants, victims of "gangs specializing in 'human smuggling and wholesale murder'" as *Newsweek* put it, had been found in Texas alone. *Newsweek* argued that the flow of people across the border was essential to assuring "bank vaults . . . bulg[ed] with farmers' cash." Quoted in Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 55.

TABLE 3.1 Apprehension and Deportations, 1940–54

Year	Deportations
1940	8,051
1941	6,082
1942	5,100
1943	8,860
1944	29,176
1945	69,111
1946	101,478
1947	199,282
1948	203,945
1949	293,000
1950	480,000
1951	509,040
1952	528,815
1953	885,587
1954	1,108,900

Source: Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 59.

braceros—who did not come with the bureaucratic baggage of Mexican Nationals.* With undocumented workers, growers could exercise what they saw as their "right to hire and fire farm labor as we [see] fit." The INS abetted this right by adopting a policy of not checking farms for illegal workers during the harvest of perishable crops. But, as Ernesto Galarza noted, undocumented workers

* Provisions in the international agreement and the procedural manual of the FSA/WFA limited the use of braceros to those who could employ one hundred or more at a time. While growers associations, which pooled labor demand, made it possible for small farmers to access bracero labor (and while, as we will see, the formation of labor supply associations was a primary policy aim in the bracero years), it is also the case that these policies provided at least some incentive for smaller growers to turn to undocumented labor. See Copp, *"Wetbacks" and Braceros*, 29.

were "not an unmixed good." Because they were *libre* (free workers), undocumented workers could abandon a field in search of higher wages, a practice at least legally barred to braceros. "Wetbacks" thus "had a way of vanishing from camp overnight singly, or in groups, enticed by some runner who led them to greener pastures." There was also always the threat of INS raids, however remote. "As pirating made the price of Wetbacks uncertain," Galarza concluded, "so fear made them undependable."[11]

California wanted and needed flexibility in labor supplies, and the large pool of undocumented workers helped achieve this. Galarza estimated that by 1948, "the active Wetback supply in California probably exceeded 40,000 men." But growers also wanted predictability, which is what the bracero program offered. For this reason it is not surprising that by 1951, the tomato fields were picked by "equal parts . . . *braceros* and illegals, with domestic workers, mostly in family groups, a poor third." California's share of the thirty-two thousand braceros eventually transported into the United States in 1946, together with its share of braceros held over from the previous year, those undocumented workers contracted into the program, and the remaining fourteen thousand POWs employed in agriculture in the nation, allowed for maximum predictability within a context of supreme flexibility. They allowed for significant control over wages, no matter what the pressures of the *libre* (undocumented or domestic). Throughout the history of the program, only a minority of growers in California ever hired braceros. Indeed, braceros never constituted more than about one-quarter of all seasonal laborers (and about 11% of the total agricultural labor force in the state). But for much of its history, the program had widespread support on the theory that an end to importation would constrict supply, while also making collective bargaining more likely, and thus threaten the profitability of all farmers, not just bracero users. A form of predictability, a source of flexibility and fluidity in the labor supply, braceros were thus a form of what one economist has called "government-administered labor market insurance" that also significantly depressed workers' wages.* For this reason, perhaps, when in October 1946 the FPC discussed voting to *oppose* future labor importation from Mexico—because the combined forces of undocumented and domestic labor made it seemingly superfluous ("California on the whole is getting plenty of help")—it expected significant opposition from "some large growers" and growers associations.[12]

* Lloyd Fisher was more blunt: he just called them, accurately as we will see, "indentured." *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 124.

Waged Bodies—and Wages

In 1949, the Los Angeles–based Spanish-language newspaper *El Angelino* called braceros "Modern Slaves" (*Esclavos Modernos*) and said they were subject to "the most inhumane exploitation." Tens of thousands of men sought the opportunity to be so exploited. In the first years of the program they descended on Mexico City, hoping to be selected; later they converged on processing centers in Irapuato and Guadalajara, then on recruitment offices in Zacatecas, Chihuahua, Tampico, and Aguascalientes. By 1950, three main centers were operating: Empalme (Sonora), Chihuahua, and Monterrey. A series of border "reception centers" were established on the U.S. side, the most important for California being in El Centro. Applicants to the program usually had to secure *el permiso*, a document showing its bearer met the basic requirements of the program and meant to be used to ration the number of applicants. However, "an oversupply of men and an undersupply of *permisos* stimulated a number of corrupt 'cottage' industries beginning with the selling of *permisos* at the village level"—a practice made possible by the instant appearance of loan sharks. Payment of bribes—*mordida*, "the bite"—for a place in line, for access to the recruiting process, or just for half-decent treatment at every other step of the way, became common.*[13]

Oral histories by braceros are vivid in their recollections of the vetting process. *Aspirantes* were amazed by the large crowds of job seekers in Mexico City and later Empalme and by the waits of one, two, or three months for their names to be called and the processing to begin. Many of those gathered at the processing centers were desperately poor; many had no money for food; some starved to death waiting. Others served as a reserve army of labor for the expanding cotton and vegetable fields in northern Mexico—many of them developed and managed with American corporate capital and U.S.-based foreign aid. Some prospective braceros found they had to pick thousands of kilos of cotton on the area ranches in order to secure a place in the program at Empalme. Once selected, workers were subject to examination for fitness and attitude, and for

* Corruption marked the whole system. On the California side, and as will be discussed further in chapter 11, the FPS (which eventually took over the bracero and domestic worker placement tasks from the Extension Service) took bribes from growers to assure the declaration of labor shortages (and hence eligibility for braceros) and for the placement of favored workers. See California Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 146–49. Henry Anderson of the University of California estimated that in the late 1950s, on average braceros took on 1,200 pesos ($120) in debt in order to secure a contract and start working in California. Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 105, cited in Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor*, 64.

calluses on hands, which presumably indicated previous experience in farm work. A quick health exam, checking especially for venereal diseases, accompanied by a strip search for drugs, culminated in a DDT spraying—a fumigation that was often repeated at the El Centro reception center, where lindane (effective against lice) was also used. "We were dusted like animals," one former bracero recalled.[14]

The indignity of the fumigations remained with braceros long after the program ended. Accounts of the procedure fill oral histories:

> Then, they would fumigate us as is done with animals.
>
> When we crossed the border, we were stripped of our clothing and were sprayed with some kind of powder with high-pressure hoses.
>
> They threw a powder on us to disinfect everything. When we crossed over to the United States, they used more chemicals to clean us up in case some of us were sick. . . . They undressed us again and, once again sprayed us with some kind of powder as if we were some kind of *lacra* [scourge]. The powder gave us horrible headaches.
>
> From Empalme, we were shipped from the border to Calexico, where yet another health inspection awaited us. There we were sprayed with what I think was DDT, as if we were plants or as if they were spraying a herd of cattle.
>
> We also got sprayed all over with a powder by a machine. It was like talc to kill animals or I do not know what. We were all undressed and sprayed in case we had a certain disease.
>
> Another thing they would do when we crossed the border was fumigate us by undressing us completely and then they would throw powder all over our bodies. They also gave us two pairs of clothing in a box and the powder was thrown on the clothes as well.[15]

From the other side of the border, spraying was interpreted differently: it assured local residents these were "safe" and worthy Mexican workers, not vectors of disease or drugs.[16]

Once processed and accepted—and many applicants were not—workers were sent by train or bus to growers' camps, essentially now as "property of a grower." As Gonzalez summarizes, "Braceros were, in legal terms, indentured laborers, recruited and processed by the U.S. government with the assistance of the Mexican government and placed under the control of agricultural corporations for specified periods of time, after which the braceros would be disposed

of—that is repatriated." Some—like those who ended up in the guarded Orange County camps—were made to understand their propertied status viscerally. Others, though housed in FPC or growers' camps, had a bit more formal freedom. But they were very much just bodies, just arms. After conducting two hundred interviews with Mexican National workers, additional interviews with camp managers, union organizers, and Mexican consuls, visiting camps, and attending numerous meetings and assemblies, Ernesto Galarza recorded his impressions of bracero camp life. The primary complaint was "boredom." "There is nothing to do on Sundays but stand around," workers complained. "There are no opportunities for learning something about the United States." They were here just to work—and to work on someone else's terms. Whatever the promise of the contract, workers complained, "there is no grievance machinery for prompt, effective, and just investigation of complaints" (in Galarza's words). Indeed, Galarza found a certain "reticence amounting to fear with regard to their grievances. In large and small camps the men have stated that if they press a complaint, they are told they can go back to Mexico if they don't like conditions. . . . A worker who persists in pressing a grievance, or makes himself the spokesman for his fellows, runs the risk of being regarded as an 'agitator.'"* He *had* to be an agitator, since rational calculation showed that, having greased palms all the way from the home village; having spent weeks or months moldering around Empalme—or maybe having worked at starvation wages in Mexican cotton fields—waiting for his number to be called; having beat out all those other *aspirantes*; having endured a humiliating health checkup and dousing with pesticides; having suffered a hot, crowded, endless train or bus ride through an alien land to his new place of work, no reasonable bracero would willingly throw away his job, risk being blacklisted, and find himself back in the impoverished state from which he had arisen with nothing to show for it.† After all, he was earning the prevailing wage in the United States, a wage far

* As Galarza notes, the terms of the contract made it nearly impossible to complain. Workers were required to secure the assistance of the Mexican consul, but in doing so—in finding a way to get to the nearest office, in taking the time of hoping to find the consul available, in filing the complaint—workers would be away from work and thus breaking their contract, making them candidates for deportation.

† Growers were convinced there were innumerable agitators among the early braceros. C. C. Teague complained at the annual meeting of the California Chamber of Commerce that "most" of the first Mexican Nationals admitted under the FSA "carry membership cards" in the Mexican unions and it was because of that, that "notwithstanding that they came from Mexico where wages and living standards are low" and that they "were earning more than

in excess of what he could earn at home—and there were thousands of others waiting their chance to take his place.[17]

The notion of the prevailing wage was central to the whole operation of the bracero program. From the first international agreement with Mexico to the last, braceros were guaranteed they would be paid the prevailing wage for the crop and region in which they were employed. On the one hand, this proviso was meant to guarantee that braceros would be paid a reasonable wage; on the other, it was meant to guarantee domestic workers would not be undercut by Mexican National workers. The idea of the prevailing wage was, according to Galarza, "an entering or beginning wage which recognized, so it was hoped, the *status quo* in the local labor market and which further assumed that such status would not be disturbed by the addition of . . . alien workers."[18]

But the prevailing wage was a curious thing in California agriculture. There, wage rates were rarely a matter of negotiation, even if a practice of pirating other growers' workers meant there was occasionally something of a wage market. Instead, wages were *set* at the beginning of each season, usually in a wage hearing sponsored by a growers association and attended (usually exclusively) by area farmers. By the 1930s, wage fixing was "taken as a matter of course in California," with the terms set by growers and "disseminated by the public press or by association bulletins or by the journals of farm organizations and commodity associations. . . . The wage fixing decisions [were] publicly made, matter-of-fact and undisguised in their purpose." Typically, the "method for establishing specific wage rate for agricultural labor in California [was] for growers to get together informally or in formal conferences before seasonal operations begin and to set or recommend the basic or prevailing rates to be paid for different kinds of work," according to Senate testimony. Growers associations were not always entirely successful in enforcing the fixed wages. Pirating, momentary and localized labor-demand squeezes, recalcitrant growers, and every so often organized workers forced wages out of their predetermined groove. But the crucial point for the bracero program as it began was that the *idea* of predetermined and fixed-wage rates was generally accepted, and that it stood, in California agriculture, for what in other industries was considered the prevailing wage: "The relatively subtle means employed by nonagricultural employers, such as the surveys of 'prevailing' wages of white collar workers conducted

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the requirements of the contracts," they had still struck their employers in the Salinas Valley. "Address by Charles C. Teague at the State-Wide Meeting of the California State Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry," Teague Papers, Box 58, File B.

by employers' associations or public utility companies." Such survey methods, economist Lloyd Fisher summarized, had "no place in California agriculture."* Prevailing wages were not determined; they were announced.[19]

From the beginning, the idea that growers ought to meet to unilaterally set prevailing wages was taken as crucial to the operation of the bracero program. Even as the first Mexican National workers were making their way to California in September 1942, growers there and in Arizona were meeting, with FSA blessing, to establish the wage that would be paid. Certainly American officials did not see the prevailing wage as a minimum; nor did they see it as inflexible, if conditions warranted. As Warren Schoonover, the state supervisor, Emergency Farm Labor, WFA, wrote in 1943, "The actual prevailing wage is a changing thing, perhaps from day to day, or from ranch to ranch." In an attempt to bring some bureaucratic order to the question of the prevailing wage and thus to assure the terms of the contract were met, the WFA laid out in a lengthy memo a set of hypothetical cases—cotton choppers, pea pickers, lemon pickers, and so on, working under different circumstances (workers for whom an "official" prevailing wage had been determined, workers for whom it had not, growers seeking to lower wages in the face of changed market conditions, growers employing "mixed" crews of domestics and braceros where the latter were provided housing but the former were not, districts where braceros made up a majority of the workers, etc.)—and suggested procedures in regards to each to guide their agents' actions.[20]

This early memo outlining the hypothetical cases is important in the history of the bracero program because it shows that even as early as July 1943—less than one year into the program—bureaucrats in the labor importation program began grappling with a problem that came to be known as "domination": crops and regions that were dominated by imported workers and thus in which a non-bracero prevailing wage made no sense (see chapter 10). The wages paid braceros became the prevailing wage. As it happened, it became not inconceivable, indeed it became inevitable, that braceros—workers who could be "repatriated" whenever growers thought they were being "agitators"—would come to displace and replace domestic workers, who would not take jobs at the wages braceros were required to accept.[21]

* Galarza presents a thorough analysis of California practices, including references to relevant laws, in "Analysis of the International Executive Agreement between Mexico and the United States for the Recruitment of Farm Labor—Signed August 1, 1949," Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 5. There he argues that prevailing wage—used, for example, in government contracts—was usually established through a survey of *union contracts* and hence was a creature of collective bargaining, not a one-sided determination.

The problem of domination was only incipient in the war and immediate postwar years, but it was a straightforward logical outcome of the practice of allowing fixed wages to stand for prevailing wages. Braceros could only be imported to a region or crop if the Extension Service (or later the USES) certified a labor shortage. In a 1946 letter to the secretary-treasurer of the San Joaquin Industrial Union Council (CIO), the director of the FPC, Don McColly,* laid out the procedure:

> At the appropriate time the Extension Service will refer the orders [for braceros collected from various farmers and growers associations] back to the local county from which they originated for the following action: It will require signed statements from County Farm Placement Managers, from County Farm Advisors, and from the County Farm Production Committee whether or not in their several opinions a supply of American labor would be available to do the work contemplated in the order. Final decision will then be based on the opinions expressed and also upon the supplies of domestic labor in other areas tributary thereto. If in the final analysis the needs warrant, a certification will be issued to the Labor Branch, Production and Marketing Administration [the successor to the WFA] and contracts will be negotiated for the use of imported workers.[22]

Such was the procedure, but there was a catch, of course. The question was not, as McColly said, whether there would be American (domestic) labor available but whether there would be domestic workers who would work *at the price set*. And the power the growers possessed to unilaterally set wages was not only large but positively encouraged by federal and state governments during the war.

In order to procure braceros during the war, all but the very largest growers had to organize themselves into associations, variously termed "growers associations" and "farm labor associations." Between 1942 and 1946, some seventy-four associations were organized in twenty-nine California counties.† "The

* R. L. Adams resigned his position as director of the FPC in early 1946. McColly remained director until January 1947, when he resigned to become the director of the Department of Agriculture of the California State Chamber of Commerce, though he continued attending FPC meetings until the commission was dissolved at the end of June 1947. See FPC, minutes of meeting, January 16, 1947, Warren Papers, FPC, File 735. After descending from his perch in the state Chamber of Commerce McColly became the long-serving director of the Wine Institute.

† By 1950, the number of bureaus had decreased to nineteen, but they were concentrated in the crops that used the most (and mostly) braceros. The decline was in part a function of the growing ease of securing undocumented workers and consequently the rise of private labor contractors.

pattern of operations for these associations . . . was very similar," according to a 1946 report. "All farmers or growers were eligible to membership. Each organization was managed by a board of directors ranging in number from three to seven and a paid manager. They were financed by fee, contributions, a payroll tax, an assessment on the hours of work or productions of the workers, or a combination of these methods." The FPC itself was instrumental in establishing most of these associations, spurred on by federal agents who thought such associations "streamlined their contract signing work." As historian Lawrence Jelinek concludes, the upshot of their formation "was that employers were better able to pressure these administrators for quota and contractual concessions and to resist the bargaining efforts of all farm workers."[23]

The work of the growers associations was not always formal. One farmer, a peach grower, pleased with his association's "wage stabilization" function, described its workings: "Well, the program was worked out by a bunch of peach growers. . . . In 1942 we set the price for picking peaches at 10¢ a box. . . . And we employed a fellow who we called a fieldman, he just circulated around among those owner-farmers and more or less attempted to police the thing and see that people weren't violating the agreement—it was just a gentlemen's agreement. . . . Now there was no way to fine or no way of coming back at a fellow if he violated his agreement except to kick him out. But everybody stuck to his price." While this peach grower admitted pirating still occurred "when a man got into a pinch," everybody understood such practices were now an aberration rather than the norm. This was not true across the state, as other growers reported continued breaking of wage agreements in the desperate rush to get the harvest in. For that reason, as one farmer testified in 1944, "I think the best control that we've ever had in this country is the Mexican labor (Mexican nationals) coming in here and stabilizing things."[24]

A double bind was established: working through their associations, growers determined a wage; if, at that wage, not *enough* domestic workers were on hand to maintain that wage, then Mexican Nationals were brought in since there was *evidently* a labor shortage. Braceros were contracted at this prevailing wage and were legally bound from accepting work from other employers—work in other crops, in other industries, or even for other farmers than those to whom they had been assigned—for a better wage. Wages were stabilized and domestic workers were squeezed out.[25]

The quotidian working of what Galarza called "the creation of a labor shortage," and thus the phenomenon of domination, was well illustrated in the citrus orchards of Ventura County—C. C. Teague's home turf—in 1947. At Rancho Sespe, one of the largest citrus ranches in the county (4,000 acres), work was

scarce enough that hours were being scaled back both for the 150–60 braceros and for the 100 domestic workers then on the payroll.* Unemployment in the county was on the rise, with 50 percent more people claiming unemployment benefits than the previous year, according to the secretary of the Ventura County Industrial Union Council, CIO. But the fact that there were roughly as many Mexican National workers in the county as there were jobless claimants at a single USES office "does not evidence the fact that Mexican nationals are displacing domestic workers," in the words of the Production and Marketing Administration's William Anglim. Since growers were required to meet minimum-hours guarantees for braceros (but not for domestics), since they had to pay the prevailing wage to braceros (but not to domestics), since they had to provide housing for braceros (but not for domestics),† and since they had to meet certain payroll auditing procedures for braceros (but not for domestics), "these Mexican nationals are, therefore, premium workers in that the labor costs to those who employ them are materially increased over the costs that would accrue if domestic workers were available for the work. It is, therefore, not reasonable to assume that agriculturalists would accept this added burden of expense if they could obtain domestic workers to produce and harvest their crops."[26]

Despite high levels of unemployment, domestic workers were evidently not available in Ventura County. The chair of the Ventura County FPC wrote to Governor Warren to set the record straight. Of the nearly 1,700 unemployed people registered in Ventura in March 1947, "640 were women and therefore not qualified to replace the Mexican Nationals.‡ Only 282 of the 1688 admitted any agricultural experience." As importantly, in the experience of county lemon growers, those who did have experience "either refuse to pick fruit or . . . quit such work soon after employment." As required by law, Ventura growers were paying the prevailing wage. But this wage had been established during the war "under restrictive wage ceilings" when growers "were compelled to utilize Mexican Nationals and prisoners of war," a period during which braceros came to dominate citrus work, especially harvest tasks. In other words, though growers complained braceros were more expensive, they were in fact contracted under conditions of artificially low wages, and now they were the *means* of maintain-

* Rancho Sespe management claimed that the preponderance of braceros was due to a lack of housing for domestic workers, a matter to be addressed in more detail in chapter 4.

† Anglim's implication that room and board was free to braceros was not quite right; rather, there was a limit on what growers could charge braceros for room and board.

‡ The issue of whether domestic women workers could work in the fields—if they were qualified to demand the jobs given braceros—came to a head in 1954 and is examined in chapter 7.

ing these low wages. The prevailing low wages in turn kept domestic workers away and made Mexican National workers necessary. Indeed, at the same time the Ventura County FPC was explaining away the unemployed—they were women, they were uninterested in working—it was also recommending to the Extension Service that the allotment of braceros in the county be increased, from 1,700 to 2,289. This request was duly approved by the Extension Service, after "full and mature consideration."[27]

The wage, says geographer Geoff Mann, is "politically *productive*"; it is "a crucial site of the cultural politics of capitalism, a dynamic and indeterminate (or 'overdetermined') forum in which the cultural and political economy of capitalism is produced." The wage, moreover, "produces the politics of social difference at least as much as, and probably more than, it reflects it. It is not an empty indicator of bargaining power but a simmering pot of the material and symbolic stuff that makes up lived time and space." Mann quotes the economic theorist Stephen Marglin to make his point: "In societies like ours, one's work and pay play an important role in the very definition of self. To offer to work for less than the going wage is necessarily to lower one's self-image."[28]

But that "going wage" is itself a critical site of the cultural—and economic—politics of capitalism. Having no say in its determination, finding it lower than what it takes to live, and understanding it was not an adequate measure of the strength, stamina, and indeed skill required in harvest work, many workers in agricultural California found it just not *worth* it to accept agricultural work. Had "full and mature consideration" not so frequently found that ever-more Mexican National workers were indeed warranted; had those imported workers not, through the recruitment process, been so thoroughly stripped down to their bare essence as bearers of labor power, stripped, that is, of not just the "material and symbolic stuff of lived time and space" but the real, essential stuff of *personhood*; had, in other words, the state-supported ability to determine the worth of labor not been handed off almost entirely to growers and their associations, then it is unlikely that the President's Commission on Migratory Labor could write in 1951, "whether the wage agreed upon is sufficient to attract the labor supply needed is apparently not usually considered [by growers] an important factor in making the decision" of what the prevailing wage was going to be. The commission continued:

> The point we . . . wish to emphasize is that the "prevailing wage," as currently in vogue in seasonal and migratory farm employment, is in some respects worse than meaningless. The recruitment of the labor supply prior to the opening of seasonal work obviously requires some sort of a wage quotation. When this wage

> quotation is set by agreement among farm employers with little or no regard to whether it is a sufficient wage to attract workers, it cannot very well serve as the price to equate the supply of and demand for labor. This is especially true when contract foreign workers are brought in at the arbitrary wage rate which then inevitably tends to set the pattern of wages in the locality. Consequently, it is useless to pretend that this "prevailing wage" has either fairness or the precision of a wage developed by employers and workers meeting on equal footing.[29]

It may have been meaningless, but that did not mean it did not continue to be used; in fact, it remained a central piece of the Mexican labor importation program until its very end.

It continued to be used because though it was meaningless in the sense the President's Commission used the term, it was in fact quite meaningful on the ground, precisely *because* the importation of braceros "at an arbitrary wage rate inevitably . . . set the pattern of wages" overall. Seeking as close to a controlled experiment as it could find, the commission compared labor importation in California and Texas during and after the war. During the war, Texas was banned from the program (at the insistence of the Mexican government, which was appalled at that state's overtly racist practices), while California "received the overwhelming majority of Mexican nationals," a large number of which were deployed to the cotton harvest. Between 1940 and 1945, cotton-picking wage rates increased 136 percent in California; in Texas, they rose by 236 percent. In the postwar period, 1947–50, California cotton producers received relatively few braceros (8% of the U.S. total), while Texas growers, now admitted to the program, received large numbers (46%). In California, wages rose by 15 percent; in Texas, they declined by 11 percent. Braceros may have cost more overall compared to domestic workers paid the same wage, as California lemon growers complained, but that misses the point: having access to braceros—indentured workers—lowered what Marx might have called the *socially necessary* wage and thus lowered the cost of labor power overall.[30]

One bracero, José Luis Gutiérrez Navarro, later recalled his time working in the cotton, melon, and vegetable fields:

> I was barely able to pay for my room. . . . Our relationship with our boss was not very good. He would always give us a hard time. We never worked fast enough for him and he always found a reason to yell at us for picking spoiled carrots or bad cotton. At times he emptied our bags and would not pay us. We did not get along well at all. He was there to drive us hard and to get the most out of us. . . . If I had to do it all over again, I would, but under new and better terms. When I came, contracts were never fulfilled. It was all business. When it was over we had

> to go back and start all over. It was hard to make a lot of money. I would do it now, but with better conditions in which people earn a decent wage and are treated as human beings.[31]

Growers understood the boon this controlled labor supply meant. They understood its primary role of guaranteeing flexibility in the labor supply,* and they came to thoroughly appreciate its effect on overall wage structures. If Governor Warren had to be reminded why California growers were importing workers even as unemployment in the state was approaching crisis proportions, growers needed no such reminder: they *knew* why it was so crucial to do so. It was why wresting the importation program from the FSA and putting it in the hands of the more grower-friendly WFA was such a big victory. It was why, as the war ended, they now desired to control the coordinating role assumed by state and federal agencies, and it was why in early 1947, C. C. Teague once again found himself at the heart of attempts to write new federal legislation governing agricultural labor that would further benefit California growers.[32]

As the head of the California Chamber of Commerce's Agricultural Labor Committee, Teague created a subcommittee—consisting of some of the most prominent agriculturalists in the state, such as Robert DiGiorgio (nephew of Joseph DiGiorgio, who has a starring role in the following chapter), Ralph Bunje (director of the influential Agricultural Labor Bureau of the San Joaquin Valley), James Mills Jr. (a Northern California orchardist who was among the first to congratulate Governor Warren on dumping Carey McWilliams), and C. B. Moore (of the powerful Western Growers Association)—to travel to Washington and work with other agricultural organizations to draft legislation for a national farm labor program. Such a program seemed necessary. As desirable as bracero workers had become, many in Congress seemed determined to end their war-emergency importation.† And while growers meant to do all they could to preserve importation, contingencies had to be laid that would allow domestic workers to be controlled and deployed in a way as beneficial as Mexican Nationals, preferably with even fewer guarantees to workers. They wanted domestic workers, too, to become mere vessels of labor power. Farm organizations thus drafted a bill that would direct state Extension Services to (1) coordinate information on supply and demand of labor, and create mecha-

* By 1949, it was simply "common sense" that labor importation was "insurance in getting the crops in," at least as far as the California State Department of Employment was concerned. Lenhart to Galarza, January 27, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

† In April 1947, Congress passed PL 40, which declared that the importation of Mexican workers under PL 45 would end within thirty days after December 31, 1947.

nisms for recruitment and training of workers; (2) operate labor supply centers, or sell or lease them to local authorities or growers associations; and (3) recruit, transport, and supervise foreign workers. Crucially for growers, and completely indicative of how they understood their workforce, the proposed bill stipulated that

> no part of the funds appropriated or made available to any department or agency or the Government for the recruiting or placement of agricultural workers shall be used directly or indirectly to fix, regulate, or impose wage rates or housing standards, to regulate hours of work, or to impose or enforce collective bargaining requirements, or union membership with respect to any agricultural labor except with respect to workers imported in the United States from a foreign country; provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the expenditure of such funds in connection with the negotiation of agreements with employers of agricultural workers which may provide that the prevailing wage returns shall be [paid] for particular crops and area involved and that shelter shall be provided for such [foreign] workers.

The Chamber of Commerce précis of the bill put the matter more succinctly. According to it, the bill made it clear that "in no event is authority given to control the workers, or to fix wages, hours, working conditions and the like." Growers, in other words, very much wanted what they already had, only more so: labor as nothing more than a factor of production.[33]

The year 1947 would turn out to be an eventful one. While, as chapter 4 shows, California growers were not going to get a program in precisely the form they laid out in their draft bill, they were going to get something at least as good, and in some ways better. They would get control over the federal labor camps the FSA and WFA had worked so hard to construct during the Depression and war, and they would get some power to directly recruit workers in Mexico, rather than have to work through the federal government, the growers' true "dream of heaven." All this they would get, even though as this draft bill was being discussed in the Chamber of Commerce by now-former FPC director Don McColly, who served as the secretary for the Chamber's subcommittee that helped draft it, McColly's old boss, the chair of the FPC, Frank Shay, himself hardly a friend of labor, declared there was a "surplus of labor in California and that the Farm Production Council [was] taking steps to return the Mexican Nationals."[34]

Scale

Infrastructures of Landscape and Labor Markets

LEMON GROWERS IN VENTURA COUNTY could refuse to hire women workers, or male domestic workers they did not like, because they had ready access to labor from Mexico, labor that was vital to the maintenance, reproduction, and expansion of their capital, their crops. Lemon trees represent a sizable and long-term investment—it takes four to five years before trees produce enough fruit "to pay," as C. C. Teague put it. Oranges take even longer, in some places as long as ten years. During this time (and after), they are susceptible to frost in many parts of California. An additional infrastructure of irrigation, smudge pots, oil pipes, coal heaters, and more needs to be created. Near the orchards there need to be built and maintained packing sheds—with elaborate washing and sorting machines—and temperature-controlled warehouses. ("The greater part of the lemon crop is picked in the late winter and spring months," says Teague, "but the chief demand comes during the summer when hot weather in the East stimulates the market. It is therefore absolutely necessary for anyone in the lemon business to be equipped to carry over at least a portion of the lemons picked earlier in the season to take advantage of summer prices.") There is, in other words, a lot of capital fixed in, and in support of, an orchard: Teague writes of million-dollar bonds issued to develop a single, albeit large-scale lemon and orange orchard (which was remarkably paid off despite experimentation with what Teague quickly determined was "inferior" stock). Labor power had better be there to harvest and pack the crop when it is ripe. Few growers would, or could, risk forgoing a harvest. They will only ignore available labor if they can.[1]

And, the bracero program makes clear, they could ignore local, domestic labor, precisely because of the construction (and exploitation) of landscapes, landscapes vital to the reproduction of labor power, *elsewhere*. If it is "proper and important" to think of the "landscape as nearly everything that we can see when we go outdoors," as Peirce Lewis argues it is, then it is also proper and important to think of the landscape as also composed of what is *not* there, of what we can*not* see, if only because it is *not* there, just outside our door. No landscape is local. Instead, it is what Rich Schein has termed a "node" in a network of

relations that stretches from the point of production out across space and thus necessarily incorporates built landscapes—morphologies—elsewhere.[2]

In order for lemon growers in Ventura—or for that matter, beet growers in the Salinas Valley or lettuce ranchers in the Imperial, whatever the specific natural differences among their crops—to rest assured labor of certain kinds could be ignored, a whole landscape on the other side of the border had to be either harnessed to their purposes or built anew. Stadiums had to be turned into processing centers; parks had to become makeshift homes; sheds had to be constructed to warehouse canisters of DDT; garages had to be at the ready to service the buses. The production of *these* landscapes required the production of a new *scale* of operation for capital, its owners, and its managers. They had to radically transform their scale of influence.

It is proper and important to understand scale as *produced*. Perhaps no concept is as frequently invoked in geography these days as "scale." At its most basic the term refers to the size or extent of some process, set of relations, or thing. In everyday language we are well accustomed to thinking about local, regional, national, and global scales, and the images these terms call up are helpful: it is not hard to see how the sphere of action that defined the everyday lives of domestic farm workers in Ventura County in the 1940s was "local," even as it was defined by laws that operated at the state and national scales, agreements that were international, and factions of capital that were clearly global in their circulation. It is also not hard to see the limits to ordinary ways of thinking of scale: *of course*, domestic workers' lives were not totally determined in or by the local scale, rather, as the mantra goes, processes, relations, and lives operate at multiple scales and the key task is to understand precisely how such processes (etc.) are "multiscalar." This is not easy and some geographers have simply given up the task, preferring instead to develop a theory of "flat ontologies" because, for them, scalar theory is inevitably hierarchical (the local is nested in the regional, the regional in the nation-state, the nation-state in the global), when the world is not. It, instead, is made up of longer or shorter networks. But this totally misses the point, because it takes scale as given rather than produced. It also misses the point because the reality of farm work in California that confronted workers like Octavio Rivas Guillen—and "ontology" is really just a fancy word for reality—was anything but flat; it was lumpy as hell, wildly uneven.[3]

Geographers' latest interest in theorizing scale was jump-started by a series of forceful arguments by Neil Smith and Andrew Herod at the beginning of the 1990s, arguments rooted in a theory of uneven development—the lumpiness of the capitalist world. Together they made it clear that scale in the social world was never given, only ever made: a production. For Smith, the key concern was

the struggles that established the extent of the arena within which cooperation and competition among capitals was organized, since in capitalism the potential of a world market was "given" in the very concept of capital itself (as Marx put it in the *Grundrisse*), but also since uneven development was at the root of all capitalist expansion, at root of the push toward fulfilling the potential of a world market. He later extended his argument to show how different kinds of social actors struggled to actively expand or contain social, political, or economic action—for example, how municipalities struggled to contain homeless people within specific neighborhoods—and how through these actions, the very "arena" that was scale was made and remade. As a corollary, he argued that the ability to "jump scales"—to rapidly expand a sphere of operation by an order of magnitude—was a vital source of power, as vital as the power to control action *within* a scale. Herod developed these arguments less in terms of the operation of capitals or the functioning of elite classes, and more in terms of organized workers as they sought to gain some level of control over the conditions of their work and reproduction. He showed, for example, that longshore workers actively produced new scales of cooperation and competition (among themselves and among the shipping companies) when they won coastwise contracts that assured workers in specific localities were not pitted one against the other quite as ruthlessly as they had been. In both cases, the point was the scale of the national economy or the Atlantic seaboard was never just "there," but was instead constantly made and remade.[4]

The bracero program was a radical production of scale. It radically expanded the extent of the farm labor market. If, as C. C. Teague crowed, by World War II, his Limoneira Ranch comprised "400 homes on the property," and "four to five hundred employees are given year 'round employment and six to seven hundred are employed at the peak," then as the war drew to a close the temporary, and as we will see even the permanent, employees could be secured not just locally, but now, because a new infrastructure (both physical and juridical) had been put in place, from deep into Mexico. The production of this new *scale* for the labor market depended, fundamentally, on the fact that it stretched across a wildly uneven geography of social reproduction, wherein a national boundary—a marker of another produced scale, one produced through imperialist war as well as through the grasping power of imperial capital—made a world of difference in the *value* of the labor power now readily available to California growers. Bracero labor power was reproduced under conditions vastly different from those reproducing domestic labor power. But the creation of a single, differentiated labor market meant that the average value of labor power—measured by what I called in chapter 3 the "socially necessary wage," which is the

wage that sets the terms of competition for and by labor, and thus sets the rate of social surplus value production in the fields and orchards—shrunk. It also meant the "historical and moral elements" that set the standards for *exploitation* were radically transformed. As Gilbert Gonzalez shows in some detail, growers were adept at arguing that since wages were better in the United States than peasants were likely to get in Mexico, braceros ought to be able to put up with any amount of exploitation, happily.[5]

This radical production of scale required a radical production of infrastructure, as noted: it was not nearly enough to announce an international program of labor procurement; nor was it enough to put the legal machinery in place (the focus of many of the standard histories of the program). The production of this other landscape, the necessary infrastructural landscape in Mexico (and at the border) of profitable production in California, was a difficult and contentious process, only aspects of which will be revealed in the following pages (a truly transborder historical geography of the bracero program remains to be written, though Gonzalez does excellently with the political history, Deborah Cohen has recently added a solid account of transnational bracero subject formation, and the Bracero History Archive is simply an indispensable font of oral histories, photographs, documents, and more). But there is no doubt that once built, it too represented a set of sunk costs (as well as a lot of what I will later call "dead labor") that themselves had now to be either figured into the costs of production or somehow written off—or at least they would have to be if growers proved unable to get their way in Washington and the bracero program truly came to an end, the scale of the labor market was shrunk back (legally and infrastructurally) to match the scale of the nation-state (or even smaller if no national domestic program agreeable to growers was forthcoming), and the extent of infrastructure "internalized" in the landscape when we stepped out of the door of a worker's bunkhouse or manager's cottage on the Limoneira was concomitantly foreshortened.[6]

Besides the scale of the labor market, growers actively produced the scales at which they organized their markets. Teague's involvement in the development of Sunkist and Diamond was nothing if not an attempt to produce and control the scale at which wholesale markets were created. By 1942, he boasted, the California Fruit Growers Exchange controlled "approximately three-fourths of the entire movement of packed citrus" from California and Arizona. By the same time Joseph DiGiorgio, who was described in one fawning portrait as farming from Central Park South, controlled fruit markets in Baltimore, New York, Chicago, and elsewhere. These produced scales—of labor and of markets (as well as those of production)—were intimately linked and, after several years

of the bracero program, now seemed to depend on each other in new ways: marketing fresh California produce across the whole of the United States (and beyond) seemed to require a labor market constructed at a continental scale.[7]

Given what was at stake—what had been produced in the early years of the program and thus what was now available to growers in California—growers would fight hard to preserve the program and to reproduce what they saw as the natural scale of the agricultural labor market. For two vital things were at stake: the value of labor power and the productive landscape in California now capitalized on the assumption of labor power value determined at this supernational scale. At the same time, various bureaucracies in both the United States and Mexico now had a vested stake in a supranational labor market. Because they needed to maintain their own bureaucratic rationale and had invested so much in this infrastructure of labor movement, they could not bear to see it go to waste.[8]

Yet labor was not powerless in these struggles over scale and landscape production. Indeed, much of Ernesto Galarza's work in California, both as a researcher and as an organizer with the National Farm Labor Union (NFLU) (and its successor) that entered the scene in 1947, was dedicated to contesting the extension of the labor market across the U.S. border, in essence, scaling it down to a series of local labor markets within which workers might have greater control. It was also dedicated, as we will see, to exposing the iniquitous nature of the extended infrastructure—from the land usurpations of rural Mexico, to the bracero processing center at Hermosillo, to the sprawling shantytowns in border cities like Mexicali that housed both undocumented and commuting Mexican workers—that made the California landscape so profitable, and thereby transforming it into something else.

Capitalist farmers like Teague or DiGiorgio, labor activists and theorists like Galarza, and program bureaucrats like William Anglim or Don McColly all understood that the ability to produce scales of operation—for labor markets or marketing—was a means to control or command space, the space necessary to maneuver, to grow, to survive, to prosper. This put them right at the heart of a dialectic in which the built landscape—the morphologies that made social life and political economy possible—took on added importance. As David Harvey once put it, there is a "simple rule" governing the struggle to produce spaces, landscapes, and scales: "Those who command space can always control the politics of place even though, and this is a vital corollary, it takes control of some place in order to command space in the first instance. The relative powers of working-class movements and the bourgeoisie to command space [have] long been an important constituent in the power relations between them." Nowhere

was this "simple rule" and its corollary clearer than in the labor camps and at the gates to the fields in California during the late 1940s as the newly chartered NFLU sought to organize domestic farm workers in the face of continued efforts by growers to wrest control of the federal (and other independent) camps and to continue to import Mexican National workers. Growers and workers alike understood just how crucial these specific places (the ranch gate and the labor camp) were to their abilities to shape the scales that structured their profits and their lives.[9]

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CHAPTER FOUR

Organizing the Landscape

Labor Camps, International Agreements, and the NFLU

The crucial point in eliminating the Mexican nationals is the willingness of our own people to do the work which nationals are doing. Nationals work in sugar beets for both thinning and harvesting, the picking of citrus, the picking of tomatoes, and some deciduous fruits. In general, the class of work in which they are employed is the most arduous in agriculture, being either stoop labor or tedious fruit picking. It is possible to have considerable unemployment and still have a shortage of agricultural workers of the types mentioned due to the unacceptability to our own people of the type of job offered. The solution to the problem certainly revolves about ample domestic housing on farms and near farms, the education and training of our people in certain of the jobs mentioned, and *possibly the problem will be ultimately met when some of our people are reduced in economic circumstances to the place where they do not have the choice of employment which they now think they have*. This is a very blunt statement and it is nothing that we wish, yet I am sure that it is an important fact which has influence upon the situation.

J. Henry Burke, Director, Farm Production Council, to Vera Fowler Clayton, Secretary, Governor's Council, May 13, 1947

C. C. TEAGUE'S SUBCOMMITTEE WENT TO WASHINGTON in January 1947, and with national farm organizations drafted what became (with not many changes) House Resolution HR 3367. HR 3367 included all that growers wanted and added to the list a proviso that all federal "labor supply centers, labor homes, labor camps, and facilities and equipment pertaining thereto . . . shall, as determined by the Secretary [of Agriculture] be available to . . . State agencies . . . until liquidated, and such liquidation shall proceed as expeditiously as possible and be completed not later than December 31, 1948, and . . . in the liquidation of such properties . . . all sales or other dispositions thereof shall be made only to farmers or associations of farmers in the community for the purpose of housing agricultural workers."* In other words, HR 3367 sought to hand the federal labor camps—the ones that had first been built by the FSA to confront the agricultural housing crisis of the 1930s, and which had been expanded during the war—to growers.† No longer would they be public camps; no longer would they necessarily be camps within which workers had a certain degree of autonomy over their lives and conditions; no longer, perhaps, might they continue to serve as a model, a point of pressure, as they had been, for "obtaining better housing standards in rural areas in the past two or three years than was possible in the past thirty years" as one internal document put it in 1946.[1]

Opposition to HR 3367 (and its companion Senate Resolution [S Res] 1334) by organizations concerned with farm labor—unions, church organizations, progressive groups‡—was strong. Points of opposition included especially the

* While not part of the original draft law produced in Washington, growers, and especially California growers, had long wanted direct control over the government camps; see, for example, the repeated resolutions of the CFBF, beginning in 1946, calling for the government camps to be sold or otherwise transferred to growers associations. A compilation of CFBF resolutions was made by the Governor's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley: "Compilation of California Farm Bureau Federation Resolutions," Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 16.

† The CFBF's draft bill provided only that surplus federal farm worker housing be transferred to the secretary of agriculture to be made available to state Extension Services to house farm labor. It also sought to repeal a provision of the Farmers' Home Administration Act (1946), which would have allowed the labor supply camps to be sold to the "highest bidder." (The FHA abolished the FSA once and for all.) HR 3367 went considerably further by seeking direct grower control over the labor camps at a nominal cost. "Preliminary Draft of a Bill," Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

‡ Among others, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) opposed the legislation because of its provisions to hand housing over to growers, to continue the labor importation program, and so forth. See "Report of the NAACP Labor Department at the 38th Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., June 26, 1947," Clarence Mitchell Papers, SUNY College at Old Westbury, available online at http://www.clarencemitchellpapers.com/Sample%20Documents%20III.htm (accessed March 19, 2008).

fact that the bills denied the government the authority "to impose minimum standards" or to enforce laws relating to "working conditions, contracts, wages and hours, or of minimum housing standards." A provision making health care for migrants available only on voluntary and prepay bases was opposed both because of likely abuse and because "prepayment deductions from unorganized workers, without government regulation and supervision constitute what we consider an objectionable form of industrial paternalism." Additionally, the bills did nothing to positively address recent Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor recommendations on child labor, child care, and school attendance for the children of farm workers.[2]

Working closely with groups opposed to HR 3367, California Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas introduced an alternative bill (HR 3856) that sought to transfer much authority for regulating farm labor from the USDA to the USDL. It provided that the USDL would be required to hold public hearings to determine the "prevailing wage" in crops and districts, which would then be "set" by the secretary (taking this power out of the sole hands of the growers); for the payment of wages in legal tender; for guaranteed employment for 75 percent of the time between the first and last workday; for coverage of farm workers by local workman's compensation laws; for establishing and enforcing standards for farm labor housing; for policing compliance with wage and work laws; and for the transfer of labor supply camps to the secretary of labor (and thus their continued operation as public camps).[3]

Labor Supply Camps

Neither bill passed, but a third one did. This bill (HR 4254/S Res 1555) was much narrower in scope. It focused only on the question of labor camps and how they were to be disposed of by the federal government. Earlier, the Farmers Home Administration Act (passed in August 1946, with considerable grower support) had not only abolished the FSA once and for all, it also provided for all federal farm labor housing to be sold to the highest bidders. Growers soon realized this provision might work against their interests, either putting the camps out of their reach or, worse, allowing labor organizations to purchase them. To rectify this, and not finding enough support for HR 3367 (in the face of union and progressive opposition), they pushed for a law to modify the camp liquidation program. This bill, widely known as the Bramblett Bill, passed both houses without amendment and was signed into law on July 31, 1947, as PL 298.[4]

The bill provided that, notwithstanding the Farmers Home Administration Act, "the Secretary of Agriculture may dispose of any labor supply center, labor

home, labor camp or facility . . . and any equipment pertaining thereto or used in the Farm Labor Supply Program . . . for such prices and under such terms and conditions the Secretary may determine reasonable, after taking into consideration the responsibilities to be assumed by the purchaser, to any public or semipublic agency or any nonprofit association of farmers in the community who will agree to operate and maintain such facilities for the principal purpose of housing persons engaged in agricultural work and to relieve the Government of all responsibility in connection therewith." Neither laborers' organizations nor community groups (other than growers associations) were thus eligible to buy the camps.* The bill further provided that the federal government should cease operation of all camps and other facilities by January 30, 1948, though it could contract out the operation of those camps not sold to "responsible public, or semipublic agencies or nonprofit associations of farmers." In fact, Congress had already only appropriated enough money to allow federal operation of the camps until September 30, 1947, and the Bramblett Bill did not appropriate any more.[5]

The bill represented a victory for many growers who had long chafed against the federal camp program because it allowed for too much autonomy among workers.† Coupled to that, in the wake of the war, the camps had also begun to serve as a stay against the hypermobility of many agricultural workers. For a significant number of farm workers, the labor supply centers, and their associated apartments, were becoming something like permanent homes, especially since by the 1946 harvest season there was a severe rural housing shortage in California. Typically in the camps there was nonetheless "rather frequent turnover in population as people move on to follow the maturing crops." The twenty-eight camps in California, in other words, continued to support the "nature of crop plantings" that Harry Drobish had talked about when he first advocated for their establishment. But, despite the massive intervention of the

* For its part (and according to a report of several directors of California state agencies), the AFL in California did not want to operate the camps itself. It wanted the state to operate them. "Migratory Farm Labor Housing: Background and Factual Data," September 8, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716.

† This concern was perhaps confirmed by California Department of Agriculture employees who regularly undertook investigations of residents of labor supply camps who sought to organize other residents. See, for example, the investigation of H. A. Rahim, an "organizer for the National Farm Labor union" who, according to this investigation, had "the object of purchasing the entire camp for the purposes of making it a Farm Labor Union Headquarters." Saunders to Jaqueth, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; see also Senator Harry Drobish, "Present States of Federal Farm Labor Camps in California," Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 21.

FPC in the preceding three years, "the turnover in 1946 was relatively light . . . because housing was so scarce that folks were afraid to move unless they had definite assurance of shelter in a new location." In the face of the housing crisis the camps seemed to be freezing up the liquidity of labor. For many growers the solution was to get rid of the camps altogether. Barring that, they wanted to take control of them to assure that residents were resident only when they were working on area farms and that they hit the road when they were not.[6]

The passage of the Bramblett Bill represented a victory for large growers, but also exposed a schism in farming circles. Large growers wanted control over the camps, and at this stage ownership of them. Small farmers, as represented by the California Grange and others, opposed the liquidation of the camps and feared their control by large growers. For them the camps had provided good, safe housing for necessary workers, housing they did not have to directly pay for. Small farmers were supported by unions and others who now pushed for the state to take control of the camps. Without state control, unions in particular argued, workers would be reduced "to the level of chattels."[7]

The question of farm labor housing had once again become paramount in California, despite and because of the massive work of the FPC in reconstructing the labor camp landscape during the war (work that had, after all, been geared primarily toward housing "supplementary" bracero workers). And the question of farm labor housing became even more acute on June 30, 1947, when (even as the various farm labor bills were working their way through Congress), the FPC liquidated itself as per the terms of its enabling legislation, having first sold off its stock of camp buildings, tents, equipment, and so forth, mostly to farmers and entirely at fire sale prices. No longer, therefore, was there a state agency even nominally devoted to providing housing for farm labor (whatever the nature of the ongoing crisis).* Faced with an evident rural housing shortage, growing unemployment, an influx of transient workers from the East, the im-

* There was much debate among growers' organizations as to whether to seek the FPC's continuation beyond the "war emergency." Some growers saw the end of the FPC as an opportunity to assert conservative values of thrift and minimal government involvement; others sought to continue an agency that they saw as clearly beneficial to their interests (and over which they had significant control). MacGregor to Warren, February 6, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715; minutes of meeting, March 6, 1947; Bunje to Warren, March 6, 1947; Agricultural Labor Bureau to members of the California Farm Production Council, all in Warren Papers, FPC, File 735. The California state legislature eventually passed a law creating a five-hundred-thousand-dollar revolving fund that continued some of the work of the FPC. It allowed the Department of Agriculture to purchase and resell housing to growers. Paul Taylor argues that this led to a marginal increase in the quality of housing for farm workers in private camps. Taylor, "Perspective on Housing Migratory Agricultural Laborers," esp. 198.

minent closing of the federal camps, and the elimination of the FPC, Governor Warren ordered the directors of the major state departments—Finance, Agriculture, Industrial Relations, Public Health, and the Employment Stabilization Commission—to form an ad hoc Committee on Farm Labor Camps to conduct a survey of housing conditions and to propose recommendations as to whether the state should control the federal camps. The committee reported to the governor that the attorney general had found that "there is no existing law under which Farm Labor Camps could be taken over from the Federal government and operated by the State of California. Therefore, legislative determination and action seems necessary before the State can take any direct action relative to the Federal Labor Camps." The legislature was not due to meet until the following year.[8]

In the meantime, the Production and Marketing Administration of the USDA—which by late June had already served eviction notices on camp residents—began transferring camps to growers' organizations through the mechanism of a revocable use permit set to expire on December 31, 1947 (with the possibility of extension through June 30, 1949). Such permits required no rent from growers associations, but did require operation and maintenance costs be borne by them.* By September 30, 1947, nonprofit growers associations had received control of twenty-six of the twenty-eight labor supply camps in California. One camp had been previously transferred to a cannery company (Flothill Products), and continued to be operated by it, and one was of no interest to any growers' groups and had in fact been closed by the federal government in November 1946. The growers associations' articles of incorporation "uniformly included a provision to the effect that 'tenants of camps shall have free choice of employers as long as they remain, and continue in agricultural work,'" according to the California deputy director of finance in a report to the governor. This provision, he argued, "should be highly satisfying to organized labor." But this rather misses the point, as even the California Chamber of Commerce admitted. As Don McColly of the Chamber wrote to the governor's secretary not long after growers took control of the camps, "In the local areas served by these camps there is an adequate supply of transient labor. In one instance the charge for housing is $1.00 per month yet vacancies exist. The labor apparently prefers to live in tents or trailers on property other than that which employs it."[9]

It is hard to overestimate the shift in the geometry of power this liquidation

* To be fully accurate, growers were required to pay a nominal rental fee of one dollar per month, per camp. DIR, DoH, *Agricultural Labor and Family Housing Study, Part I: Farm Labor Centers: A Preliminary Report to the Advisory Committee* (Sacramento: DIR, DoH, 1961), 6.

of the federal camps represented. The camps had originally been constructed during the Depression not only as an emergency intervention into the utterly appalling housing conditions that marked the California fields; they had also been constructed—so their architects hoped—as an emergency intervention into the lopsided and frequently violent relations of labor. They were specifically understood as a means of curbing, at least a little, the overweening power of growers to control the lives of workers; to prevent housing from being used as a tool of strikebreaking and union busting; and to create at least a limited island of worker independence and semiautonomy in the sea of grower hostility that defined farm work in California.[10]

The camps that resulted were remarkable. The Tulare camp, for example, was established in 1938 on 69 acres of land and consisted of 48 garden homes, 20 two-bedroom apartments, 10 three-bedroom apartments, 255 metal shelters for transient workers, a community center, utility buildings, a clinic, the manager's home, and an office building; a public elementary school was built adjacent to the camp.* The Brawley camp, also established in 1938, occupied 32.2 acres just north of the city and consisted of 29 garden homes, 24 duplexes, 73 one-room wooden shelters, 2 warehouses, 5 utility buildings, 3 army barracks (used to house braceros), a manager's home, an office, a community center, a shop, and a garage where residents could work on their cars. Not all camps were as large, and not all contained garden homes, but all provided relatively clean, safe, decent housing of a variety ranging from homes and apartments to tent platforms and trailer pads. All were governed by a federally employed camp manager and a democratic camp council.† Pressure from workers, unions, concerned citizens, and activist groups on the state to intervene in the operation of the camps—the Bramblett Bill allowed camps to be sold to public authorities as well as growers associations—and to keep them out of growers' hands was therefore intense, and Governor Warren seriously considered the option.[11]

* Little of this was to remain by the end of the program; indeed, the appalling conditions at the Tulare camp became the proximate cause of the struggles that launched the historic farm workers' movement in 1965; see chapter 14.

† The month before growers took control of the camps in September 1947, the DoH undertook extensive inspections of each camp. Their reports indicate several were in excellent condition, many needed minor repairs (fixing screens, "a thorough clean-up job," repainting, waterproofing wood dividers in shower rooms, cleaning out the floor drains in laundry rooms), and a couple needed more extensive repairs (replacing the sewage system, putting hoppers under spigots, replacing some metal sleeping structures). The degree of compliance with the state labor camp act was considerably higher than that of private camps. DIR, DoH, "Report Covering 'Federal' U.S.D.A. Camps," Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716.

Despite there not yet being legal authorization for the state to purchase or operate labor camps, the ad hoc Governor's Committee on Migrant Labor Camps arranged a meeting with the disposal officer on farm labor camps of the USDA, in part because the committee expected many growers to give up their revocable use permits at the end of December 1947. Camps in California operated at a considerable loss. William Anglim of the Production and Marketing Administration, and the main federal overseer of the camps in the West, estimated the cost of operating all the camps in California when they were under federal control was one million dollars a year, but they took in only four hundred thousand dollars in revenue. Anglim expected the six-hundred-thousand-dollar annual operating loss would only increase as necessary maintenance came due. Growers had assumed control of the camps at peak season, just as crops up and down the state were coming due. Now, as the harvests wound down, the Governor's Committee expected growers, facing mounting expenses with less income from rents, would jump ship. Growers had other ideas. First, they objected strenuously to even talk of state involvement in operating the camps. Second, they figured that if the state was out of the way as a potential operator of the camps, they could stonewall the USDA and force it to significantly drop its price. After all, the Chamber of Commerce's McColly asserted, according to the terms of the Bramblett Bill (and the earlier Farmers Home Administration Act), "it is not the obligation of the farmers to *buy* the camps—it is the obligation of the Department of Agriculture to *sell* the camps."[12]

Whatever growers' arguments, a smallish 1947 harvest (and thus low earning for farm workers) followed by a winter drought in the San Joaquin Valley and a serious freeze in the Imperial, and an ongoing surplus of domestic farm workers, led to a sense that action on the part of the state was necessary. In early 1948, Governor Warren thus asked the newly convened legislature to pass enabling legislation that would allow the state to purchase and operate the camps, while simultaneously pushing the USDA as to the terms under which it would sell to the state. On March 2, the legislature appropriated ten thousand dollars to study whether the state should take control of the camps. But a joint resolution was simultaneously introduced that would bar the state entirely from involvement in the camp program. On March 18, the California Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture held a hearing on the resolution, and unanimously voted in its favor.[13]

Two days later USDA Secretary Clinton Anderson made to the governor "an exclusive offer, good for thirty days from the date of this telegram, to sell the

21* operating camps in California at a price equal to 10 percent of the appraised value of land improvements, non-expendable equipment, operating supplies and material"—or (precisely) $613,464. Warren quickly forwarded the secretary's telegram to the legislature and released it to the press. The legislature failed to act. The governor thus requested that the secretary hold the offer open for another year. The secretary answered that he had no authority to do so under PL 298.[14]

However, given the confusion in California, as well as in other states, the secretary of agriculture suspended camp sales later that spring—though not before first offering the camps to growers associations at 15 percent of assessed value. Finding the current practice of rent-free leases suited them well, and likewise finding that with the status of the camps unclear they could defer maintenance indefinitely, growers refused the USDA offer.† Nor did they seek to offload their permits to run the camps as the governor's ad hoc committee had predicted. Rather, growers argued that experience was showing farmers were proving adept at running good labor supply camps in which "the workers have been happy." Growers liked to congratulate themselves on how the camps were in "better physical condition than . . . under government operation." They claimed they were far more efficient in running the camps than the federal government ever was.[15]

Others thought such efficiency came at the cost of deteriorating conditions and undermined workers' rights. An investigator for the BAE interviewed a 10 percent sample of workers in eleven of the California camps. Saying that he had "been quite distressed at the changes I have been seeing taking place," he found only two of the camps "to be in as good condition when the government operated them." In these camps, though, longtime residents were upset that they were barred from purchasing their garden apartment homes, assuming growers wanted to retain the camps so they could "use housing as a control measure." The investigator found that growers associations had cut camp management employment in almost all the camps, even as rents were raised. In one camp, apartment rents began at five dollars a month when the camp was first built at the end of the 1930s, and had risen to sixteen dollars by the end of government operation. In the two months since, rents had been raised to thirty-six dollars per month. The BAE investigator quoted one resident as follows:

* This number is exclusive of five camps operating on land leased from growers, the camp operated by the Flothill Company, and the closed camp; one camp is missing from this accounting, and I am not sure if anyone knows precisely where it went.

† Apparently at one point the growers made a counteroffer to the secretary of agriculture: a purchase price of one dollar. DIR, DoH, *Agricultural Labor Family Housing Study*, 7.

> The combined income from all the units in the camp should amount to $12,000 a month. The combined salaries of the two people on the staff could not be over $1,000 a month. The cost for gas, electricity, and water shouldn't be so great. Practically nothing is being spent to keep the place in repair. It looks as though somebody is making a lot of money off of us. We do not know who, but something is wrong. Somebody ought to investigate.
>
> Of course we don't have any respect for the camp management. Why should we have respect for a gouging landlord? Both the camp manager and the maintenance man are slack in looking after their duties. . . . We had committees to help look after things. These have been discontinued. . . .
>
> We used to think what a nice community we were going to make out of this camp. Now we have a place hardly fit to live in. They not only don't empty garbage cans, they don't even keep them clean. . . . Diarrhea is getting to be quite common due to the unsanitary conditions and we may have such an epidemic of it some time that they will have to close the camp.
>
> I don't really blame the managers. It would take 4 or 5 men to handle the job. But they do need someone above them so that they won't be so slack in their work. All they want now is to get our money. They don't try to maintain this as a place fit to live in.

The investigator was at pains to point out that these comments came from a resident in a camp that was far from the worst he visited.[16]

Other investigators echoed the BAE findings. Ernesto Galarza, now the director of Research and Education for the NFLU, visited "about a dozen" labor supply camps in December 1948. He found streets unrepaired, outdoor lighting cut, some units demolished, community halls closed up tight, and a "degree of disrepair . . . such that the fringes of these camps have begun to take on the atmosphere of nearby rural slums where there is not, of course, any pretense of housing management." He expected that "in another two years most of the labor camps . . . will look and smell very much like the notorious multifamily slums now flourishing in Weedpatch, Edison, Hanford, Tulare, Firebaugh and Modesto." Rents were rising in all camps, from 25 to 100 percent. Equally as important, "union members who have lived in government camps have begun to feel the pressure of private farmer management." While the antiunion activity had not been overt, it had been steady. Of particular concern was the growing practice of requiring prospective tenants to provide proof of employment with an area farmer in the form of a work slip. "Such slips," Galarza and some residents worried, "may easily become 'yellow dog' licenses for employ-

ment." Besides the ability to control labor and union organizing, management of the camps provided two other advantages to growers, according to Galarza. By letting conditions deteriorate, management was able "to 'prove' that migrant workers are incapable of maintaining decent housing standards," a long-held belief among farmers, and a reason frequently given for resistance to even the minimal requirements of the Labor Camp Act. In addition, "by depressing maintenance standards the present administration [of the camps] will be able to 'prove' that private management is more economical and efficient." Harry Drobish, the state senator who as director of the State Emergency Relief Agency in 1935 had been instrumental in starting the camp program, found that "under . . . farmer operation the camps have been deteriorating, democratic camp councils have been discontinued, and the health and child care programs have been abandoned."[17]

Knowing that the federal government was under a legal obligation to sell the camps, but that they were under no obligation to buy them, knowing that Governor Warren was unlikely to get his way and receive authorization to buy the camps when the legislature reconvened in January 1949, and knowing that the rent-free revocable-use permits were valid until the end of June of that year, most growers sat tight. Only five associations in California made moves to purchase the camps they operated. Congress, meanwhile, was considering the landmark 1949 Housing Act. A section of the act provided for the transfer of unsold labor supply camps to local public housing authorities (PHAs). This section was stripped out of the bill by a "combination of Republicans and southern Democrats," in Paul Taylor's words. Congress did, however, allow the federal government to retain ownership of the camps until mid-1950, by which time the Housing Act of 1950 had been passed. This law, PL 475, a defeat of the earlier coalition of Republicans and southern Democrats, transferred the camps from the USDA to the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), and allowed that agency to transfer the camps to local PHAs. Taylor averred that the USDA was reluctant, throughout this period, to let growers turn the camps into "company housing," and that USDA's delaying tactics "show[ed] a keen sense of public and employees' interests." But, as he admitted, the 1950 transfer was itself a compromise, since the Grange, church groups, organized labor, and veterans' organizations all favored national ownership and administration of the camps. Local PHAs were often controlled by farmers, almost as a division of their growers associations. Thus while the California camps remained legally public, they did not so much remain the small islands of freedom they were often imagined to be. Indeed, since many local authorities were unprepared to operate the camps (in

many districts PHAs did not yet exist), the FHA negotiated with growers associations to continue their rent-free operation of the camps.*[18]

And still, while it was the obligation of the federal government to dispose of the camps, there was no requirement that local authorities accept them. The FHA thus began a campaign of "actively contact[ing] and try[ing] to sell the County Housing Authorities [PHAs] on the idea of taking over and operating these camps," as an aide to the governor put it. To help make this sale, the USDA transferred about two million dollars to the FHA for rehabbing the camps—twenty thousand to fifty thousand dollars for each camp in the United States (depending on estimates). This was a significant amount. At the very best-run camps, investment in maintenance and improvement over the length of the growers' association tenure (October 1947 through June 1950) tended to hover around twenty thousand dollars in total; at many camps it was far less. A twenty-thousand- to fifty-thousand-dollar infusion of "federal funds [would] put those camps in first class shape," according to state officials.[19]

Doing so was pressing business for the state. For, whatever the achievements of the FPC during the war and in the years before its liquidation (the FPC claimed it housed more than one hundred thousand workers over the course of its career), whatever the efforts of state officials in the years since, there still remained a significant housing shortage throughout the agricultural districts of the state, and growers argued this made it impossible to recruit domestic workers, and hence required the continued importation of braceros.[20]

Labor Supply

Reports of labor surpluses together with high levels of unemployment, rife throughout 1947, intensified in 1948. The cotton workforce in the San Joaquin Valley, according to one report, was "so ample" in 1947, the crop was picked in record time. "This was fortunate for the growers but a calamity for those farm workers who did not have enough money to carry their families through the slack months of January to April" 1948, and matters "did not improve greatly during the spring and early summer." San Joaquin Valley welfare officials called the unemployment situation the "most serious" ever. Fresno officials reported

* The law allowed the camps to be transferred to the local PHAs for a nominal amount, after which the PHAs could deduct the costs of deferred maintenance, payments in lieu of taxes, and so on. In other words, PHAs got the camps, in the words of one California state employee, "*for nothing*." To the degree growers could control local PHAs, then, this transfer represented something like a culmination of their dreams. Wise to Prasow, May 22, 1950; Small to Files, July 5, 1950, both in Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 25.

that area growers were trying to retain workers "in reserve" and "to hold [them] for future work." In Madera County, officials reported large numbers of children missing school "due to a lack of food at home," and that the number of unemployed "jumped from 6,000 to 10,000 within a month." Yet these same officials did not want the state's 1947 Relief Act (AB 40 2057), which would have provided emergency food aid to the counties, to be activated, "as it would attract migratory workers from all over the Western States." In general, the governor was told, "this group" of officials "felt that the State should do nothing."[21]

While welfare officials were counseling inaction, California growers went to work. Having failed to get the domestic labor program they designed for the 1947 Congress, in February 1948, they sent a delegation to Washington to lobby for the continuation of the Mexican labor importation program. This was of vital importance. Congress had passed PL 40 in April 1947, even as the question of a domestic labor program was still being debated. PL 40 declared the labor importation program would be terminated on December 31, 1947 (with the proviso that the program's total liquidation could take a further month).* Even with this mandated termination, however, the law did not totally eliminate access to Mexican labor. Section 3 of the law—known as the Knowland Amendment—together with a series of agreements negotiated between Mexico and the United States allowed for the "legalization" of undocumented workers in border areas. While most of the legalized workers were "regularized" (as it was called) in Texas, "by this means a considerable addition to the agricultural work force [was] being made" in the Imperial Valley.† State officials expected that Imperial growers would use "at least 5000 Mexican workers" made available in this way. Even more, under the negotiated agreements, growers were now permitted to engage in direct recruitment of Mexican workers in Mexico—the holy grail of California farmers.‡[22]

Despite this newfound source of now-legal labor—this further infusion of controlled flexibility to feed the growers' habit of below-value wages—Califor-

* Growers in California pushed hard for this extension. See, for example, Lockwood to Warren, January 9, 1947, and several other similar letters in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

† Scruggs notes that while undocumented workers were often rounded up in border areas, once recontracted, they were occasionally sent to distant states, especially for sugar beet work. Scruggs, *Braceros*, 97–98, 324–38.

‡ The law required that various concerned organizations, including labor unions, be consulted as to availability of domestic workers before south-of-the-border recruiting would be approved. This established the practice of pro forma letters being sent to local labor officials asking that any available domestic workers appear and accept work within a given time. Of course, these letters make it clear that work was being offered at grower-set wages. See the file of letters from the USES to Hank Hasiwar, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 12; see below.

nia authorities insisted the bracero program was on its way out: it was "liquidating itself" due to massive numbers of available domestic workers. Indeed, its liquidation seemed about to be confirmed, since PL 40 expired in early 1948, and with it authority to recruit both regular and regularized braceros. While one group of growers was in Washington fighting for another extension of the bracero program, another delegation met with the governor to enlist his aid in developing Filipino, Navajo, and Puerto Rican labor programs (though growers made a show of being concerned about *which* Puerto Ricans since they "conceded that the negro people should not be brought into California," in the words of an aide's report on the meeting). Growers argued, in what was becoming a common refrain, that while it was true there were unemployed workers about, by and large they could not house them: the landscape had been remade during the war for bracero and other single workers. In the Salinas Valley, for example, vegetable growers boasted of having "one of the best housing projects in the State, but conceded that it was of the dormitory type" and so not suitable for families. Indeed, housing for families was quite impossible, they argued. To house the families of the six thousand workers needed at peak season "would require a small city," especially since in both vegetables and citrus, according to the growers, "the labor is of such a character that women and children cannot perform it." The importation of single men from Mexico, the Philippines, or Puerto Rico was thus imperative. (The same argument about housing was made by representatives of cotton growers, but in this crop, they said, there was no physical reason why children and women could not be put to work.)*[23]

Though skeptical of some of the growers' claims (and indeed the legality of keeping "the negroes" of Puerto Rico out), the governor expressed his support for the continued importation of labor, in part because the system of labor distribution in the state remained essentially irrational (whatever the hopes of the architects of the war-emergency farm labor importation programs had been), as became clear that fall. The 1948 cotton crop was "the largest planted in history—800,000 acres compared to a prewar average of 300,000," and picking was paid at the "relatively high" rate of $3.00 per 100 pounds. In response, "workers left the half-picked fields of tomatoes, prunes, and grapes, to pick cotton." Overall during the year, "there was more movement in 1948 . . . than there had been for several years, and fewer days of work. Erratic movements of the

* And children were indeed put to work. A low estimate for 1949 had it that some 35,000 children under 18 worked in agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley alone; contrary to grower claims, much of this work was in vegetables and citrus. "Child Labor," Report of the Division of Labor Law Enforcement to the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Labor Resources Committee, October 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 18.

workers produced such dislocations of the labor force as this: Workers living in Tulare county rushed away to find work in the cherries and apricots, many of them going on into Oregon and Washington. When the nectarines and plums ripened in that county several weeks later the usual local labor supply was scattered all along the Coast and some growers in the county did not have enough workers to harvest their crops." Or they would have, had the Mexican importation program not been renewed.[24]

For, as it turned out, the growers' expedition to Washington was somewhat redundant. Already by the end of 1947, key members of Congress, USDA, and the INS were working out ways to continue Mexican labor importations, whatever the provisions of PL 40. By February 21, 1948, a new agreement had been signed in Mexico. This new agreement eliminated the United States and Mexico as signatories of the individual work contracts, making them now direct contracts between the grower and the worker. This proviso meant growers were now responsible for contracting workers at the Mexican recruitment centers, and therefore also for paying the cost of transportation to the point of work. Growers thus stepped up pressure for Mexico to create recruiting centers in border cities rather than in the interior.*[25]

By now, also, the state Extension Service had been replaced as the chief "operating agency" by the USDL's USES,† a function made official by Congress in July 1948, when it passed PL 893 which, despite the formal cessation of the importation program under PL 40, directed the USES "to recruit foreign workers from within the Western Hemisphere and workers from Puerto Rico for temporary agricultural employment in the continental United States and to direct, supervise, coordinate, and provide transportation of those workers from such places of recruitment to and between places of employment within the continental United States and return them to the places of recruitment not later than June 30, 1949." The law appropriated $2.5 million for this work, which historian Peter Kirstein calls "miniscule in comparison with earlier appropriations," thus "demonstrating the basic 'hands off' policy of the United States in financing, supervising and guiding the labor operation."[26]

Recruitment centers were established in Tampico and Aguascalientes, but a range of factors led to rather slow recruiting and concomitantly growing pres-

* When interior recruiting centers were nonetheless established in the wake of the 1948 agreements, some growers refused to take (official) part in the program as a form of protest. Scruggs, *Braceros*, 392–93, 400.

† PL 40 mandated that the USES's state-level FPS work closely with state Extension Services in the procurement and distribution of farm labor. PL 893 in essence displaced the Extension Services from the labor procurement role.

sure on Mexican border towns as *aspirantes* flocked to them seeking other ways into the United States. Responding to grower pressure on the U.S. side, and the growing population of *aspirantes* at the border, especially in Mexicali, the Mexican government authorized a series of "secret" recruiting operations to be undertaken in that city.* Even as domestic workers were finding "fewer days of work" and forced to "rush away" from one place to another in search of it,† even as domestic workers, many of them Mexican American, were petitioning the governor to halt further importation, growers were finding their holy grail of direct recruiting of noncitizen workers slowly being institutionalized. Through it, they were beginning to realize a dream of creating, as the Associated Farmers once put it, "a mobile task force of Mexican workers." Not that they were fully satisfied: the wage and other protections that marked the international agreements still rankled.‡ Nonetheless, California growers pushed for more, claiming by August that they would have to import 45,000 additional braceros if there was to be any hope of a successful harvest—a plan that "many" domestic workers "said they are ready to resist . . . by violence," if necessary.[27]

But just as the record 1948 cotton crop was coming ripe, Mexico cancelled its participation in the importation program because of continued illegal recruiting by growers, with much connivance by the INS, especially when the latter opened the border wide at El Paso on October 16–17 to allow the entrance of some four thousand undocumented workers, causing an international incident.§ In response to Mexico's complaints, the Department of State negotiated

* Part of the agreement allowed California growers a monopoly over workers in Mexicali, but for each worker they took there, they had to take one worker from an interior recruiting station in Culiacan. Growers chafed against this requirement—especially after mountain state beet growers were given access to the Mexicali workers—and sent a delegation to Mexico City to plead their case, nearly scuttling the whole program by doing so. Scruggs, *Braceros,* 400–405.

† The NFLU's Galarza reported in September that "some local Mexican labor has been migrating north from the citrus belt as a result of the pressure of the Nationals who have been brought in this year," and that workers around Fresno, Salinas, and Stockton were being both directly and indirectly displaced (the latter due to wage freezes and declines) by imported Mexican workers. Galarza to Fishburn, September 20, 1948, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 3.

‡ What California growers wanted was the implementation of a "simple crossing card system for Mexican National agricultural labor." Resolution No. 12 on Mexican National Labor, California Farm Bureau Federation, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 16.

§ Kirstein draws upon an unnamed State Department document—not made public—that he calls the "Secret Study," and which was written in 1954 or 1955, to show that the USDL and the INS both favored "a permanent opening of the Mexican–United States border" but, in face of State Department opposition, they were overruled by the White House. *Anglo over Bracero*, 68.

a deal with Mexico whereby legal braceros already in the United States would be allowed to remain. The Mexican government declared their contracts would continue to be valid, and the United States agreed no more unauthorized recruiting would be undertaken. The U.S. Department of State issued a formal apology, admitting that the INS's actions were illegal. Even so, the INS made no effort to track down and return any of those who had crossed when it opened the border. In part because of that inaction, wages in California were maintained at three dollars per one hundred pounds of cotton picked.[28]

Historians of the program agree that the Mexican government "did not desire the permanent termination of the program" despite its—and the Mexican people's—rage at U.S. highhandedness in the El Paso incident (and other matters). From the other side, as Edward Hayes, the chief of the FPS, in the California Department of Employment, wrote to the Kern County Board of Supervisors, "it is generally conceded that for certain areas and crops such a program [of labor importation] is needed"—an argument widely quoted in the California farm press. It was by now common sense, as one labor analyst for the Department of Employment made clear, that "until such time as qualified and willing workers could be guaranteed for some crops in some areas, the possibility of importations should be kept open as insurance for getting the crops in."* Negotiations over rewriting the international agreement were thus planned for mid-January 1949, in Mexico City. This time, unlike during the war, organized labor objected. There was now a farm workers labor union in California that was not at all ready to "concede" that braceros were necessary in any crops.[29]

Labor

By the late 1930s, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), and especially the CFL, had become famously antagonistic toward the whole idea of organizing farm workers. Into the breach stepped the CIO's newly formed and fairly radical United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA). Consistently red-baited, jurisdictionally challenged by the conservative CFL and especially by the Teamsters in a role they would reprise throughout the postwar era—which had also developed what one historian calls a "cooperative" relationship with cannery owners not infrequently put to use in breaking UCAPAWA strikes—the CIO union nonetheless won some significant wage

* The NFLU's Ernesto Galarza argued in response that if the terms of the insurance policy were looked at carefully, the Department of Employment would have to agree "that both the Nationals and our own people are the ones who pay the premiums." Galarza to Lenhart, February 3, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

increases for its members, working in both the fields and the canneries. Like many unions of field workers (before and since), however, UCAPAWA frequently failed to win union recognition in the fields. By the end of the decade, it was focusing exclusively on cannery workers (making significant gains in Southern California and especially among *Mexicanas*), leaving the fields largely unorganized. "In the end," says labor historian Cletus Daniel, "the CIO adopted the view, long held by the A.F. of L. that agricultural workers did not constitute a labor problem as much as a social problem."[30]

Organizing in the fields was essentially nonexistent during World War II, but beginning in 1946, the AFL expressed renewed interest. One of the CFL's powerful secretary-treasurers, Paul Scharrenberg, who was among the most hostile toward organizing farm workers, had moved into the Warren administration as director of the DIR (he had served as a member of CCIH from its inception until 1921, when he was sacked by Governor Friend Richardson).* His successor at CFL, Edward Vandeleur, hardly more friendly to farm workers, passed away in 1943 and was replaced by C. J. (Neil) Haggerty, who, as he pushed the CFL toward a more mainstream liberal stance, was at least to some degree more open to the organization of field workers. When the AFL chartered the new NFLU in August 1946, the CFL was a little more compliant, even occasionally (though not always) cooperative, in the new union's campaigns.[31]

The NFLU began when the AFL turned to H. L. Mitchell, the veteran leader of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union (STFU), and asked him to lead a national effort to organize farm workers. Mitchell sent Hank Hasiwar, a fervently anticommunist former United Auto Workers representative, to begin the work of organizing in California, focusing particularly upon the white Dust Bowl migrants, many of whom had high regard for the old STFU. Because it had generally higher wages than farming areas to the south, as well as fewer Mexican Nationals and undocumented workers, and a wider range of crops, and because he was an "organizer who knew no Spanish," Hasiwar thought the northern part of the state represented the best chance for early organizing success. He thus spent three weeks in the spring of 1947, getting to know the state and key farm worker issues by "complet[ing] a circuit" from Los Angeles, up the coast through Santa Barbara and the Salinas Valley, over to Sacramento and Stockton, then down the San Joaquin Valley to Fresno and Bakersfield. For a range of reasons—from the importance of the still powerful antiunion grower "Pickhandle"

* Scharrenberg was sacked for complaining about the governor's policies toward agricultural labor; but he himself had actively sponsored undercover spying on radical migratory workers, seeking explicitly to undermine their growing power in the years before the U.S. entrance into World War II. Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 74, 123.

Hank Stroebel in the Salinas, to the transience of peach pickers in Marysville, to the ongoing presence of the Food, Tobacco, and Agricultural and Allied Workers of America (FTA) (the new name of UCAPAWA) in the canneries of Stockton—"these areas eliminated themselves." But with fledgling locals growing in Fresno, Kern, and Tulare counties, the southern San Joaquin Valley seemed right for a concerted organizing campaign, even if the Associated Farmers and other powerful organizations stood ready to disrupt any union activity.[32]

Mostly, Hasiwar concentrated on the Okie towns of Arvin, Lamont, and Weed Patch, southeast of Bakersfield, where the Valley gave way to the Tehachapi Mountains. Arvin was the home of one of the FSA's most successful camps, the model of the "Gov'ment Camp" in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. More important, it was home to a large, relatively settled, farm labor population that worked the expanding cotton acreage, the potato fields, and the hillside vineyards and orchards of the southern San Joaquin. A large number of the area residents worked at the massive DiGiorgio Farms on Bear Mountain Road.

By the late 1940s, the DiGiorgio holdings included the eleven-thousand-acre DiGiorgio Farms, a "precision planted rectangle of green six miles long (north and south) and three miles wide, [which] has its own post office and settlement and is officially known as DiGiorgio, California"; the five-thousand-acre Sierra Vista Ranch, "a self-contained community with its own volunteer fire department, restaurant, recreational facilities, dormitories, and police force"; and tens of thousands of other acres either directly owned or leased from the deserts next to the Mexican border ranging as far north as Marysville, north of Sacramento. It owned numerous packing sheds and modern canning facilities, a stockyard, warehousing operations along the railroad spurs, and the Klammath Lumber and Box Company in Oregon, whose box factory could produce "more than 100,000 feet of box shook, about three carloads" in eight hours. It operated brokerages that bought up other growers' crops and outside the state it owned fruit auctions in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Chicago, and New York, as well as citrus orchards in Florida. In 1949, DiGiorgio Corporation—known to consumers through the S&W brand (and later Tree Sweet)—reported revenue of $18,154,000, providing some perspective on the highest revenue category then recorded in the census: farms with revenue of more than $40,000. This was an empire befitting a patriarch, Joseph DiGiorgio, farming from an apartment on Central Park South, who visited his holdings in a chauffeur-driven car.[33]

In *Fortune*'s telling, Joseph DiGiorgio was an enlightened employer, something like the early Henry Ford: "he thinks the more [labor] earns, the more grapes and plums and bottles of wine it is likely to buy. . . . Di Giorgio believes an annual wage is coming and he is for it. He does not announce such beliefs

with undiplomatic violence, because not all of his big farmer neighbors agree with him." The workers around Arvin likely did not find much to recognize in this fawning *Fortune* portrait. Housing on the DiGiorgio Farms itself was segregated in nine separate camps, which ranged from excellent ranch houses for farm management, to a camp made up of five boxcars with no sanitary facilities. In between were bunkhouses with indoor plumbing for single white men, a relatively decent camp for braceros serviced by pit toilets, another camp where Mexican workers' bunkhouses jostled with pig pens, and a camp for Filipinos "in poor condition," in which "a large collection of all kinds of chickens and pigeons have the run of the camp."[34]

Outside the camp, conditions were often terrible. While the Arvin and Lamont labor supply camps remained in fairly good condition in August 1947 (with the exception of the need to upgrade the sewer systems), many "settled out" workers lived in shanty towns and informal settlements in unincorporated parts of the county. Consisting of "ramshackle cabins" and "primitive shacks without necessary sanitary facilities," the state DoH called these workers' settlements "a menace to the health and safety of their inhabitants as well as to neighboring communities and to the entire valley." The DoH attributed their development to a "lack of regulation by city, county, or State" authorities.[35]

There was no doubt truth in that claim, but workers in the county saw their spotty, poorly paid employment for big southern San Joaquin growers, especially DiGiorgio, as the primary cause of these kinds of conditions. As Ernesto Galarza later put it:

> Men with families to support and who had started working for DiGiorgio for 30 cents an hour were earning only 80 cents fifteen years later. Skilled irrigators worked twelve-hour shifts for 85 cents an hour; they ate lunch as they worked. There was extra time but no over time, meaning that the work day could be lengthened to fourteen or fifteen hours at the base wage rate. . . . There was no seniority in the fields or in the packing shed, and workers could be fired on the spot by merely being handed a termination slip. From the decisions of field supervisors there was no appeal to higher levels of management since, as Mr. DiGiorgio himself held, "there is nothing to discuss."

When they did make it home at the end of the day—or night—they either made it back to fight the cockroaches climbing up the walls of the "Mexican camp" on the DiGiorgio property, or to houses "put together with cardboard, metal scraps, and used lumber" in the unincorporated "new towns."[36]

Responding to a letter about conditions on and around the DiGiorgio Farms,

Hasiwar and Mitchell met in Lamont with Bob Whatley, a DiGiorgio employee with organizing experience and sympathy for Debsian socialism. Arvin Local 218 of the NFLU was quickly established, and by the end of August had signed up a large majority of DiGiorgio employees (858 of 1345 corporation employees, including management).* On September 22, 1947, Hasiwar wrote to Joseph DiGiorgio informing him that the majority of DiGiorgio workers had designated the "Kern County Farm Labor Union" (the Arvin Local 218) as their collective bargaining representative. He asked DiGiorgio to recognize the union and for a conference with company officials to discuss issues "amicably." Joseph DiGiorgio did not respond, and Robert DiGiorgio, who ran day-to-day operations, refused both an election and to examine signed authorization cards. Hasiwar claimed that, indeed, DiGiorgio Farms started to "fire and pressure union men." With rank-and-file pressure growing on the union officers, the Local, with the approval of the Kern County Central Labor Council, called a strike vote. Some six hundred workers turned out for the meeting, voting unanimously to go on strike.[37]

Workers walked off the job on October 1, establishing pickets (with the rare solidarity of Teamsters Local 87) at the gates to the massive farm. The company admitted at least one thousand of its workers joined the strike; the union claimed 95 percent of the nonmanagement personnel had walked. Most significant, the 130 braceros contracted to DiGiorgio and the 70 or so undocumented workers on the ranch refused to cross the picket line. DiGiorgio management called the Kern County sheriff, who appeared with a representative of the USDA to talk to the striking Mexicans. Whatever was said—most likely the workers were threatened with deportation if they honored the strike—all were escorted through the picket lines and returned to work. From their very first incarnations, the international agreements and the individual work contracts governing the employment of braceros were utterly clear: they were not to be used

* Numbers vary, but this seems the most reliable. Jimmy Price was the president. Among the executive board of the Local was one woman; the rest were white men from the Dust Bowl, including William Swearingen, who would eventually—and shamefully—be red-baited out of the union. Many *Mexicanos* joined the union and the strike, as will be seen. DiGiorgio did not hire blacks. Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 22. See Mitchell to Swearingen, October 27, 1952; Swearingen to Mitchell, November 1, 1952; Swearingen to Dowe, November 1, 1952; Mitchell to Swearingen, November 4, 1952; Mitchell to Galarza, November 4, 1952; Swearingen to Galarza, November 16, 1952; Swearingen to Galarza, December 16, 1952; Mitchell to all officers and members, December 21, 1952; Galarza to Swearingen, January 1, 1953, all in Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 7.

on struck farms. Nonetheless, for the next six weeks, the USDL dithered over whether there was really a strike going on at DiGiorgio. Despite the pickets, despite the majority of workers refusing to work, and despite the DiGiorgio Company evicting workers from company housing, DiGiorgio insisted there was not, and USDL seemed to take them at their word: what looked like a strike was merely the work of "outsiders intent to make themselves the bosses of Kern County and eventually all California agriculture."*[38]

For its part, two weeks into the strike USDA averred it could not call the braceros off the farm because

> (1) the contract and agreement does not give [the USDA] authority to take such measures; (2) the Mexican consul in Fresno directed braceros to remain on the job; (3) Di Giorgio has managed to hire 800 strike breakers, so that 130 Mexican braceros do not constitute an important part of the strike breaking operations; (4) the Mexican workers understand the role they are playing because the Mexican Government has inspectors in this country, and because the U.S. field agents in Mexico explain the nature and terms of the contract to the braceros before they sign up; (5) the recruiting program will end in December and will not be renewed.

However, continued pressure in Kern County (where at one point the union was forced to picket the FPS office to get it to abide by the Wagner-Peyser Act, which prohibited referrals of workers to struck businesses) and in Washington led, finally, to the removal of bracero workers on November 10.[39]

With the braceros removed, the strike quickly reverted to form. Adopting a strategy from the massive cotton strike of 1933, the union set up extensive automobile pickets and blocked roads. DiGiorgio bosses refused entreaties to meet with a state labor conciliator on the grounds that "there is nothing to conciliate," and persisted in evicting striking workers from their homes on the farm to make room for strikebreakers recruited—often with FPS help—from as far away as Texas. Soon the strike degenerated into the violence that so typically

* Few histories note that there was a series of simultaneous wildcat strikes in the cotton fields of the regions. Between the wildcats and the DiGiorgio strike, the harvest in the southern San Joaquin was "virtually halted," according to the *Fresno Bee*. "Arvin Farm Strikes Tie Up Harvest," *Fresno Bee*, October 1, 1947; "Strike Virtually Halts Harvest on DiGiorgio Farms," *Fresno Bee*, October 2, 1947; "Strike Caravans Patrol Arvin Fields," *Fresno Bee*, October 3, 1947. Street is incorrect when he says that the strike began after "much of the harvest season was complete." Grapes were at a peak; cotton was yet to come. Street, "Poverty in the Valley of Plenty," 28. But it is true that the timing was later in the harvest season than the union would have wanted. Hasiwar hints that the timing of the strike was forced as much by the company as by the union. Hasiwar, "Report on Farm Labor Organization in California," 7.

marked California farm disputes,* culminating in May 1948 with the drive-by shooting—the attempted assassination—of Jimmy Price, the Local 218 president, as he met with other strike leaders in an Arvin home. Nine shots were fired from a "foreign gun," and likely out of a stolen car; Price was hit in the head and nearly killed.† The strike did not end with that bang, however; rather, oddly, it ended with a whimper two years later when the last picket in front of the DiGiorgio gates was withdrawn as a condition of a legal settlement between the corporation, the NFLU, the CFL, the AFL, and some Hollywood filmmakers.[40]

This settlement was only one of the remarkable, or really, precedent-setting, features of this strike. In a tactic that would become common twenty years later, the NFLU organized boycotts of DiGiorgio products (made possible in part by the wide public recognition the S&W brand carried), and secured other unions' cooperation in refusing to handle "hot cargo" out of the DiGiorgio Farms, a practice made easier by a stunning 6–1 California Supreme Court decision overturning a state law prohibiting "hot cargo" boycotts. Despite this decision, and despite the fact that farm workers were not covered by the National Labor Relations Act, a local judge granted an injunction against the NFLU, the Teamsters, and the Wine Workers Union for violating the newly passed Taft-Hartley Act (which also did not cover farm workers) for engaging in a secondary boycott. Though this injunction was eventually thrown out on appeal, it had the desired effect of getting DiGiorgio produce moving in the meantime. In another precedent-setting event, the NFLU eventually succeeded in convincing the INS to raid DiGiorgio Farms and remove undocumented workers—as many as nineteen times by some accountings—suggesting to union activists that focus on undocumented workers and the actions of the INS was as important in farm strikes as was a focus on braceros and the frequent (though inconsistent) strikebreaking practices of the USES and FPS.[41]

Perhaps most important, though, was that as undocumented workers were removed from the farm, politicians and filmmakers showed up in the dozens. DiGiorgio and the Associated Farmers called in members of both state and

* Even accounting for biased reporting, Grubbs is likely incorrect when he writes that strikers "restrained themselves from even a single act of violence," though it is certainly true that the vast majority of the violence was perpetrated by nonstriking employees, deputies, and other agents of DiGiorgio. Grubbs, "Prelude to Chavez," 457.

† Robert DiGiorgio later claimed the wound was self-inflicted; the pictures of the bullet-ridden house published in the *Fresno Bee* make that claim risible. Street, "Poverty in the Valley of Plenty," 32–33, quoting R. DiGiorgio from Ruth Teiser, "The DiGiorgios: From Fruit Merchants to Corporate Innovators," Regional Oral History Project, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (1983), 98.

federal "UnAmerican Activities" committees to unearth communist sympathies and connections in the (strongly anticommunist) NFLU. Soon, congressional hearings (starring the fledgling Richard Nixon and which would have a long and tortured afterlife) were held in Bakersfield and used by local congressman Thomas Werdel (a law partner of one of the DiGiorgios and 1956 vice presidential candidate for the States Rights Party) to bludgeon the NFLU in the pages of the *Congressional Record*, in a controversial, because basically fraudulent, "Extension of Remarks" that DiGiorgio was able to successfully use in its propaganda battles against the union. The purpose of the "Extension of Remarks" was to put into the record a so-called majority report from the Nixon hearings condemning the activities of the NFLU, a report that in fact had no official standing according to the rules of Congress. But it was also meant to counter a film about the strike that Werdel claimed consisted of little more than "deliberately fabricated falsehoods."[42]

The film, *Poverty in the Valley of Plenty*, was made by Hollywood labor supporters. Shot in late February 1948, on essentially a pro bono basis, and with narration by prominent radio reporter Harry Flannery, the film painted a devastating picture of conditions in the southern San Joaquin in general—showing how little had changed in the decade since *The Grapes of Wrath*—and focusing in particular on the issues at stake in the DiGiorgio strike. The film ended with scenes of both legal and illegal Mexican workers being brought into the farm as strikebreakers, and with a call to other unions to provide solidarity with, and supplies for, the strikers. But before that it had contrasted shots of the homes of DiGiorgio management with "med. shot squalid working man's hut," and Flannery saying, "and these are the shacks where DiGiorgio farm workers live!" The shacks in question were not on the DiGiorgio ranch; it is highly likely, though, that DiGiorgio workers lived in them. But what the DiGiorgio Corporation latched onto was the implication that these were on the farm* and used that implication as a blunt but effective weapon against the NFLU.[43]

The film quickly made the rounds of union halls and college campuses and was shown twice on Los Angeles public television station KTLA. On March 16, 1949, a year after the film was shot, the NFLU's H. L. Mitchell arranged a showing to the Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor.

* Where, in any event, some of the camps were no better, as the DoH made clear in its investigations. "Notes from Mr. Duclus," April 12, 1949; "Di Giorgio Farms," April 12, 1949, both in Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2298. Galarza discussed this shot in detail, admitting that the "hovels" were not on the DiGiorgio ranch. "Deposition of Ernesto Galarza, December 27, 1962, in matter of Ernesto Galarza v. Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation et al.," pp. 38–39, Galarza Papers, Box 40, File 10.

In the wake of this screening and just before the statute of limitations ran out, DiGiorgio filed suit against the NFLU for libel and slander, citing the implication that the shacks shown were on DiGiorgio property, later refiling the suit (and expanding its scope) just before Nixon's committee alighted in Bakersfield. The new suit named Flannery, the union, the Hollywood Film Council (which had sponsored the production), and fifty John Does, two unnamed corporations, and five other "John Doe" unions—those who had shown the film and repeated the "libel." As the suit proceeded in court, DiGiorgio also commissioned its own film, *The DiGiorgio Story*, which purported to tell the "true story of the strike." With union funds already depleted by the drawn-out strike, and with all appearances of it being unwinnable, Mitchell made the decision to settle the suit, agreeing to admit libel (and pay a token one-dollar fine), withdraw the film from circulation, and destroy all copies; the NFLU would also withdraw the pickets from the DiGiorgio gates and call an end to the strike. In return, DiGiorgio would absolve those named in the suit from liability for unauthorized showings by third parties—a pledge it would later violate.[44]

The removal of the picket at the DiGiorgio gate as a result of this settlement marked an official end to the strike. So too, therefore, ended DiGiorgio's inability to legitimately request and deploy braceros, along with the union's concerted efforts at keeping undocumented workers out, both important victories for the corporation. But there was, for the NFLU, a nonetheless important effect of the strike. According to Galarza, over the course of the strike and "in spite of the setbacks and the tactical defeats, Local 218 had shown the staying power of an emerging type of sophisticated farm laborer. Against great odds, when organized into a union, the white, brown and black men of the NFLU had shown the capacity to draw the world's leading food grower, processor, shipper and auctioneer into a prolonged and notorious confrontation. The fact that this could be done with a very small treasury nourished their faith and strengthened their hope. It was to break their hope, symbolized by the picket, that the Corporation committed its energies from [the day it filed the libel suit]." There is no doubt DiGiorgio—one of the forces behind the founding, and funding, of the violently antiunion Associated Farmers—was dedicated to defeating the union as thoroughly as possible, for "the longer the union survived the more agribusiness had to display, one by one, the weapons of its power."[45]

One of those weapons was antipicketing and antiparading laws, forged in the midst of the strikes of the 1930s and honed to a sharp point in a massive strike of cotton pickers in the fall of 1949. In early September, as was traditional, ginning companies and cotton growers, dominated by the massive Boswell, Salyer, Camp, and other ranches around Corcoran, and gathering under

the auspices of the Agricultural Labor Bureau of the San Joaquin Valley—the main labor procurement and distribution organization in the southern part of the Valley—met to set wages for the upcoming harvest. As also was traditional, various growers presented what they thought was a reasonable wage for picking. The previous year it had been $3 per 100 pounds for first picking. For the first time ever, workers, represented by the NFLU, were able to present their own demands at the meeting. The union presented 10,000 ballots asking for $3.50 per 100. This request, according to Hasiwar, was "swept aside with considerable ridicule." Growers instead settled on a wage of $2.50 per 100, despite a federal price guarantee for cotton unchanged from the previous year.[46]

Despite threats by growers to "use all available picking machines" as well as securing "all the Mexican nationals we want [who] will be more than willing to pick for $1 a hundred pounds," pickers struck.* The strike quickly spread up and down the Valley, and included pickers of all races. The region-wide strike involved at least twenty thousand workers, one of whom was the twenty-one-year-old César Chávez, taking part in his first strike. As they had in the strikes of the 1930s, cotton pickers set up roving automobile pickets, as strong as one thousand workers each, to call workers out of the fields. Officials up and down the Valley responded by passing emergency ordinances banning loudspeakers on cars and trucks and requiring permits for parades. In Tulare and Kings counties, the emergency ordinances were immediately enforced, with local sheriffs arresting prominent strike leaders. The NFLU promised defiance, with Mitchell telling Galarza (who had by now joined the California organizing team) to "defy ban on picketing and meetings. Fill jails. Important you and Hank [Hasiwar] stay out to direct strike. Also use planes handbills meetings protest" while reminding the locals that "there are more cotton pickers out on strike than there are cells in all the jails in the state." The AFL promised to defend anyone arrested for defying noise ordinances or picketing bans: "Any so-called law denying these rights to you and your fellow workers is illegal and must be challenged." The NFLU and AFL were as good as their word, eventually winning an injunction in Tulare County against the enforcement of Ordinance No. 222, which banned car picketing and the use of amplifiers, and barring the prosecution of strike leader William Tafton, who had been arrested for violating the ordinance. The union also vigorously defended fifteen other strikers arrested as they tried to enter Kings County on September 26.[47]

With pickers solidly out, and with violence among some growers on the rise,

* The strike was part of a mass wave of strikes across the United States in the fall of 1949—the biggest since before the war—which included massive strikes in steel and coal.

a rump group of smaller growers—whose land holdings totaled some 45,000 acres—met with union officials and a state Labor Conciliation Service mediator. A deal was brokered. Wages would be raised to three dollars per hundred pounds, and growers would "not stimulate further police action" against striking workers. They would also use their "influence with ginners and finance companies to the end that they will cooperate effectively" with the new wage rate. The union would end all caravans "as soon as it received word from the conciliation service" that the settlement was in effect; it would end all picketing except if "a particular grower refuses to conform" to the new wage and other stipulations; it would cease all legal action except against ordinances "which may restrict freedom of assembly," just so long as they prosecuted those cases "without fanfare"; and it would "refrain from using loud speakers except in the immediate location of a scheduled meeting." Neither party would "issue news or radio releases relating to the cotton situation."[48]

Though union recognition was not part of the deal, the settlement nonetheless represented a significant victory for the NFLU. Mitchell attributed much of its success to the reputation the union had garnered in its "2 year fight with the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation and its refusal to accept defeat at the hands of one of California's largest farm operators" and that because of this the "Associated Farmers feared another long drawn out strike supported by the American Federation of Labor, financially and otherwise."* "With victory behind it," Mitchell wrote, the NFLU was "now in a position to begin the job to organize the 200,000 workers employed on 17,000 large scale farms in California which produce 64% of the state's food and fiber products." In retrospect, Galarza was less sanguine, though he did argue that in addition to winning wage increases and some prestige for the union, the strike created "a massive stir of harvesters within which a small core of workers could gain some experience in leadership."[49]

At the same time, with a permanent supply of braceros still uncertain, the 1949 strike induced a significant increase in the adoption of mechanical harvesters, though the story of the adoption is more complex than that (also crucial was the sheer expansion of cotton acreage, together with the fact that unlike fresh fruits and vegetables, the aesthetic damage a mechanical picker did to a cotton boll did not much matter). Even more significant, though, was that despite the increased wages, nothing was done to stabilize the workforce and

* Farm workers in California were engaged in major strikes on at least seven occasions in the 1949–50 harvests, ranging from the DiGiorgio and cotton strikes in the southern San Joaquin to asparagus and tomato pickers in the northern part of the valley. Governor's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 289–92.

extend the season. While the increased wage got a few more dollars into the pockets of Valley cotton pickers, they were still, by and large, desperately poor. Indeed, less than three weeks after the union held a big victory meeting to celebrate its success in the cotton strike, reports started to reach Governor Warren's desk of infant children of farm workers resident in labor camps in the cotton belt dying of malnutrition, maybe even starvation. Before the year was out twenty-eight infants in farm working families would be certified as having died from malnutrition, diarrhea, and related ailments in Kings and Tulare counties (the epicenter of the cotton strike)—a number H. L. Mitchell said significantly underrepresented the true horror of deprivation in the Valley.[50]

Conditions in the Valley were, in other words, every bit as bad as *Poverty in the Valley of Plenty* had described them even if conditions on the DiGiorgio farms were not the worst to be found.* The infant deaths, as one county welfare director noted, "took place during a period of peak employment of agricultural workers"; they were, in other words, part of the conditions of *employment* (not unemployment). And, he averred, they occurred not among migrants but rather among more-or-less settled-out workers. Work conditions were, in other words, beginning to approach a situation where "some of our people are reduced in economic circumstances to the place where they do not have the choice of employment which they now think they have," as the FPC's Henry Burke argued would be required before Mexican National labor would no longer be necessary.[51]

But Burke actually got it backward. The immiseration of domestic workers was not a way of eliminating the bracero program; the bracero program was a means of assuring the immiseration of domestic workers. A Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor had already argued in 1947 that as long as there was "continued importation of foreign labor" conditions for domestic workers would not improve. And yet—as we will see in the following chapter—despite similar arguments made by Warren's Governor's Committee on the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley created in response to the infant deaths, such a continued importation was exactly what growers in California wanted, and exactly what they were going to get.

* As one historian put it, "As the public became aware that there was indeed a strike, Di Giorgio began defending itself with the claim that its wages and housing were among the best in the industry—a telling argument because it was true." Grubbs, "Prelude to Chavez," 457.

Violence

Overt and Structural

"THE STORY OF MIGRATORY LABOR," Carey McWilliams once wrote, "is one of violence: harsh repression interrupted by occasional outbursts of indignation and protest." The repression could indeed be harsh: vigilante committees burning Chinese worker camps in the 1870s and 1880s, deputies opening fire on workers peacefully gathered to complain about conditions in the Wheatland hops ranches in 1913, and the remarkable, deadly attacks on striking workers up and down the state in 1928, 1929, 1930, 1933, and 1936, when deputized growers as well as regular police frequently resorted to open fire to assert the growers' right to control wages and the labor process. Against growers' violence, workers (and small farmers) sometimes rose up militantly: from the revolts of enslaved Indians in the Spanish and Mexican missions and ranchos, to armed resistance of squatters in the Mussel Slough incident, to violent threats against strikebreakers made by communist unionists in the 1930s.[1]

Such violence, according to McWilliams, set the pattern for industrialized agriculture—established its landscape—in California. Such violence was at the heart of the capitalist monopolization of land and was, growers seemed to think, a key to controlling not only laborers and the labor process, but also farmers themselves who sought to establish California farming on a different footing, perhaps one less inequitable, and in which the ratios of exploitation that governed surplus value production were not quite so extreme. Referring to a strike in the orange groves in 1936, McWilliams wrote: "no one who has visited a rural county under these circumstances will deny the reality of the terror that exists." Vigilantes patrolled the streets, tear gas was uncorked as readily as champagne at a wedding, dogs were set loose on the picket lines; the *San Francisco Examiner* talked of "open private warfare against citrus strikers." And yet workers were not powerless, for, as McWilliams rightly argued, "whatever theoretical considerations may be entertained concerning the use of violence in labor disputes, it is evident that, from a historical point of view, migratory labor has made gains in California when it has been militant." In other words, the *system* of farming in California, the landscape and the relations it both supported and depended on, has been constructed through a *dialectic of violence*. Growers used violence to control and contain workers, to put and keep them

in their place. Workers resorted to violence to break through those constraints and undo that control. Given, as University of California economist Varden Fuller showed, California agricultural land was capitalized on the assumption of below-value labor, grower violence was a means of assuring labor's "cheapness," and to better take advantage of the national, hemispheric, and global processes that were sending more and more new workers to the state. Violence on the part of workers was a means to contest this.[2]

But to confine violence to this sort of overt manifestation actually underestimates the importance of violence in the production of the California agricultural landscape. A second kind of violence was also at work—the kind that anthropologists call "structural violence." Paul Farmer provides a useful definition of structural violence: it is "suffering [that] is 'structured' by historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces that conspire—whether through routine, ritual, or, as is more commonly the case, the hard surfaces of life—to constrain agency." He says the constrained agency, injury, ill health, or death that results from structural violence is in many senses "modal" suffering. It is *typical* suffering. It is, in other words, part and parcel of the state of affairs; it is not somehow accidental, incidental, or random. It is constitutive of the very conditions of possibility of the world we know and live in: *modal, typical* suffering is integral to the *modal, typical* landscape. The "reality of the terror that exists" is not only the direct violence of vigilantism and strikebreaking; it is not only this overt violence that establishes and maintains the modal or typical landscape, but also the everyday debilitating violence of appalling work conditions, bad sanitation in the camps and fields, the constant mobility and sleeping rough that marked—and destroyed—so many workers' lives, the respiratory and other diseases that came with migrant work, and the preventable injuries and illnesses that defined that work.[3]

Structural violence, together with overt violence, is at the dialectical center of the morphology of landscape and of the relations of production and reproduction the landscape serves as the foundation for. Structural violence and overt violence establish the conditions under which landscapes in other places, and processes operating at other scales, are internalized in California's local landscapes of production and reproduction. Both kinds of violence are, after all, essential aspects of the "historical and moral elements" that establish the value of labor power and thus the nature of exploitation within capitalism in general and capitalist agriculture more specifically.

Structural violence, perhaps even more than overt violence, can therefore only be addressed through structural change: through radical changes in the built environment as well as through radical changes in the social relations that

give rise to and are shaped by that built environment. The struggles of the NFLU were geared (among more immediate aims) to force this structural change. Growers' demands for ever larger numbers of indentured braceros were geared (sometimes explicitly so) to prevent such change. McWilliams thought war conditions in the early 1940s might shift the weight of history toward the workers and their demands, perhaps even leading to a decasualization of agricultural labor such that the *story* of migratory labor would be more or less relegated to the past. The bracero program assured he was wrong. Nothing made this clearer than even as California officials were fretting about and investigating the 1949 infant deaths in the San Joaquin, California growers were poised to make their biggest advance yet in turning "emergency" Mexican National labor into permanent bracero labor.

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CHAPTER FIVE

The Persistent Landscape

Perpetuating Crisis in California

The fallacy of "certified need" is based upon a personal prejudice and subjective interpretation by State and Federal employment officials as to what constitutes "availability," of domestic workers. This interpretation is set forth by Mr. Edward F. Hayes [director, FPS] when he stated that "foreign labor will not be used except as a supplementary force when domestic workers are not available and willing to accept the job offering." This is substantially the position taken by the USES also. Now, it should be noted that the "job offering" is never described in terms of wages or other conditions of labor. To these officials if domestic workers refuse to pick cotton at $2.50 a hundred pounds that constitutes unavailability of domestic workers and automatically justifies "certification of need" of aliens. This is a myth which the labor movement must pin down without equivocation. *There is no such thing as availability pure and simple. Conditions are always inherent in job wages, services, treatment accorded by the employer, etc*. Stripping the employer-worker relationship to an economic fig leaf makes the matter simple but not necessarily pure.

Ernest Galarza, National Farm Labor Union, 1949

The technical requirements of decasualization are perfectly clear. They have been known ever since the British experiments with the decasualization of dockworkers in the early part of the century. The labor supply must be restricted and registered, hiring must be confined to a single central source, labor must be allocated by a central authority. The central authority may be an employers' association, a trade union, the government, or some combination of these, but whatever the character of the central authority, the requirements of the program to use trade union terminology, are a hiring hall, job rotation, and preferential employment.

Lloyd Fisher, *The Harvest Labor Market in California*, 1953

DESPITE NO REAL LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY to do so (though with much support from members of Congress), and despite Mexican displeasure with the border opening at El Paso in October 1948, the USES began negotiation in January 1949 in Mexico City to forge a new international agreement governing the importation of Mexican National labor. In advance of these negotiations, the federal government established a Special Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, made up entirely of "prominent farmers" and charged with counseling "the Employment Service on matters pertaining to agricultural manpower." The USES also held a series of meetings directly with employer groups throughout November 1948. In consultation with the special committee, and in response to these meetings, the USES formulated its negotiating position. Only after this position (which included a push for border recruiting and the removal of Texas from Mexico's blacklist of places ineligible to receive braceros, among many other issues) had been firmly established were representatives of organized labor invited to comment on the proposal, and then they only received the proposal ten days before negotiations were to open.[1]

Labor's dissatisfactions were numerous. As Ernesto Galarza, who was quickly becoming NFLU's chief organizer and spokesman in California, summarized in a letter to CFL Secretary Neil Haggerty:

> No labor representatives, United States or Mexican, have been asked to participate in these discussions.* . . .
>
> These proposals are completely unacceptable to the NFLU. Here are some samples: the new agreement will be of indefinite duration; the United States Government is made the "agent" for the Associated Farmers; the farm bureaus will fix wages and the Federal Government will confirm them; ten percent of the Nationals' wages will be deducted and handed over to the employer under certain onerous liens; only the employers would have the right to discuss grievances with the Mexican consul; the so-called "prevailing" wage is again taken as the basis of the term for which the National signs up; the Nationals will be massed at three border points for contracting thereby creating another illegal mass crossing like that of last October; employers bonds are eliminated from the agreement; no provision is made for labor inspectors.
>
> Further, the Mexican Government has stated that they will agree to a ceiling of 60 cents an hour for all types of agricultural labor for the Nationals.

* Members of a subcommittee of the (employers') Special Advisory Committee on Farm Labor were invited to Mexico City for the negotiations to act as advisors to the U.S. negotiating team. Kirstein, *Anglo over Bracero*, 80n40.

Galarza also objected to the negotiations being held in Mexico City, where "the USES and State Department will be as far away from the heat as they can possibly get," and where U.S. press coverage would be minimal.[2]

One of the key provisions of the U.S. proposal stated that "changes in the individual work contract may be made only upon the approval of both Governments through diplomatic channels." Already in the 1948 agreement, the government had removed itself as a direct signatory and guarantor of the contracts. Galarza argued that the workers were thus a direct "party of the contract" and that now "labor should never accept the principle that changes in a labor contract should be made by diplomats without his specific knowledge and consent." Moreover, such a provision made it impossible for labor unions to intercede on behalf of braceros, whether organized or not. But most important, because most difficult to make clear to the larger public, was that despite guarantees to the contrary, any labor importation program would displace domestic workers. "Displacement of domestic workers is not only a specific, concrete, individual act which takes place in a definite spot," Galarza argued (setting the terms of a debate that was to last a decade). "It is also a function of the mass contracting and recruitment of large numbers of workers in any area for actual or potential transference to another area. By the limited, narrow, loaded interpretation given to displacement by the USES displacement cannot be proved even though wage rates may have been cut in half by the very process of mass recruiting of alien labor." The sheer logic of this process would undermine domestic worker organizing, drive down wages, and institutionalize the rotten conditions that were already part of the system, especially since the individual work contracts would only guarantee, under the U.S. proposal, that housing appropriate to "climatic conditions" be provided and then only at a level concomitant with "prevailing customs, laws or practices," which were, Galarza acidly noted, "the ditch-bank slum, tent towns and rural tenements which the Finance Farmers perpetuate even in California."[3]

In the end, no new agreement was negotiated. According to a "secret study" produced by the State Department (unearthed by Peter Kirstein), Mexican negotiators wanted a provision in any new agreement "for the regularization of workers now illegally in the United States," a provision the United States was happy with.* But Mexico refused to agree to border-city recruiting, insisting

* Mexico's starting position was that U.S. growers ought to be penalized for hiring undocumented workers. When that position was stonewalled by U.S. negotiators, it offered the regularization program as an alternative. Scruggs, *Braceros*, 412.

that braceros continue to be recruited in the interior. The United States refused to back down from its demand for border recruitment centers (even though it had, prior to negotiations, internally agreed it would allow recruiting as far away as six hundred miles from the border). Negotiations collapsed and the U.S. delegation returned home in mid-February without a new agreement.* Faced with a choice between no border recruiting and no importation program, the Special Advisory Committee on Farm Labor opted for the former and sub rosa negotiations recommenced, ultimately leading to a new agreement effective August 1, 1949.[4]

The August agreement contained all the provisions Galarza objected to back in January, and then some. The most important provision of the agreement was the regularization of illegal workers already in the United States as of August 1, 1947. It led to the rapid certification of 87,220 previously illegal workers, not all of whom were immediately employed as certified braceros (by early November, 90,526 Mexican Nationals had been officially placed in farm work, of which 71,067 were "regularized" undocumented workers). Another important provision was the institution of a policy of Joint Determinations by U.S. and Mexican authorities over the interpretation of the provisions of the individual work contracts and their violation. While a Joint Determination was being made—for example, over whether a particular employer was meeting the prevailing wage requirement, or housing was indeed of a standard supplied to domestic workers, or payroll was being properly handled—the "status quo was to be maintained." This Joint Determination procedure would be retained in subsequent agreements and prove a real source of contention, especially among the unions, because its "status quo" provision worked so strongly in the favor of growers. Joint Determinations were often stacked against workers and they also frequently took longer to produce than the harvest season, thus making them moot before they were even finalized; and, indeed, just as Galarza had feared, the Joint Determination process cut Mexican National workers out as a party to their own contracts.[5]

The new agreement did something else too, in Galarza's estimation. It created a supply of what he called "just in case" labor. The 1949 agreement required that recruitment of Mexican National labor begin no more than sixty days after need was certified. "This provision," Galarza complained, "has no foundation

* Also at stake was how discrimination against Mexican workers in the United States was going to be handled. Galarza claims that the NFLU "was in the main responsible for the delay in the signing of the new agreement," but I have found no corroborating evidence for this claim, and much against it. Galarza, "Organizational Activities of the National Farm Labor Union, July 12, 1949," Galarza Papers, Box 9, File 8.

in the facts of agriculture in the State of California. Mr. Hayes* himself warned domestic workers that labor needs change rapidly and that frequent inquiries are necessary to keep in touch with employment demands that change daily, sometimes hourly." The provision merely made clear, in other words, that Mexican Nationals were indeed a form of "insurance."[6]

Hayes confirmed this function. "Foreign labor," he wrote to Hasiwar and Galarza, "will not be used except as a supplementary labor force when domestic workers are not available and willing to accept the job offer."† It was also confirmed by the chief of the Division of International Labor and Social Affairs of the Department of State, who informed Galarza that since in the months before the August agreement was reached, "it was deemed neither feasible nor desirable to bring additional workers from Mexico," work contracts for those braceros already in the country were lengthened, and new contracts "were extended to cover the employment of . . . 'wetbacks'" in order "to meet the more immediate manpower needs of growers in certain areas . . . pending the negotiation of a new international agreement." That is, whatever the statutory legal status of the program, and whatever the status of negotiations in Mexico over it, it would be U.S. policy to always assure that there was a ready, flexible, controlled, and at least semilegal "supplementary" labor force at hand. But, of course, it was not ever only a supplementary labor force; it was also a displacing one. In early 1950, the California Department of Employment noted frankly that "there is no doubt that" illegal workers—and this had to include those regularized in the wake of the 1949 agreement—"displace domestic farm workers in some operations—the same stoop labor and citrus jobs in which the contracted Nationals are employed." At the same time, undocumented workers in other industries seemed to be forcing an ever larger number of domestic workers into the search for farm work—and thus onto the road.[7]

A 1948 survey had shown that constant mobility was a fact of life for low-wage workers in California. A survey of temporary workers in the San Joaquin Valley found that the most frequent length of stay in the Valley was 2 months

* Edward F. Hayes was the chief of the California Farm Placement Service, a primary operating agency of the bracero program; his federal counterpart was Glenn Brockway, the director of the western division of the BES. Brockway's boss in Washington, often a key player in California controversies, was Robert C. Goodwin.

† He also rather blithely argued that the international agreement had been negotiated "by both governments and by all interested private parties," apparently forgetting both bracero workers and Mexican and U.S. unions were totally excluded, except for the invitation to the latter to comment on an already hammered-out U.S. bargaining position. Hayes to Hasiwar and Galarza, August 17, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

(26%); 63 percent of these workers spent fewer than 5 months in the Valley; and fewer than 5 percent spent all their time there. Workers exclusively doing farm work averaged 159 days of work in a year; those doing a mix of farm and nonfarm labor worked an average 187 days. Among those with a home base in the Valley—what William Becker, a representative of the NFLU, called "a permanent residence, a community he calls his own"—two facts stood out. First, "for most workers . . . unemployment was the rule for part of the year." Second, for these same workers, it was "not uncommon . . . to travel or be transported 25 to 45 miles a day" for work, nor "to leave their home and family for one or two months" to search for work in other parts of the state. As Becker asserted, "It is important to note that when farm workers move from one area to another area, they do so because there *is no job at home*."[8]

Whatever the arguments of his colleagues in the Department of Employment, the FPS's Edward Hayes held steadfast to the argument that Mexican National workers never displaced domestic laborers. The NFLU's Hank Hasiwar told a different story. Displacement began, he argued, in the Imperial Valley (and to some extent San Diego) and pushed north. Growers in the far south of the state steadily increased their use of Mexican National contract workers in the wake of the 1949 agreement. Hasiwar estimated there were in the neighborhood of 5,000 Mexican Nationals in the Imperial in January 1950. So great did Imperial Valley growers find their need for imported labor that in a little over a year, state officials would begin planning for the importation of 40,000 legal Mexican National workers, most of whom would be "used in the Southern counties, particularly the Imperial Valley." At its peak in March, the Imperial hired some 23,000 to 24,000 workers, so these plans were remarkable. In addition to braceros, of course, there was an unknown number of undocumented workers in the Imperial, totaling perhaps as many as 6,000 to 10,000 in January 1950 (it was estimated at that time that there were some 10,000 illegal entrants into California each month)* and another large contingent of daily crossers from homes in Mexicali.[9]

Pushed by the influx of Mexican National workers, increasing numbers of domestic workers were thus heading north, "flooding" the San Joaquin Valley with "displaced Mexican Americans from the Imperial Valley," as Hasiwar put it. This was not an unusual occurrence. In the winter of 1948, a deep freeze

* The problem of what they invariably called "wetbacks" was a persistent concern for organized labor. The CFL's Haggerty tried to raise it at every meeting of the Governor's Committee on Agricultural Labor Resources in the San Joaquin Valley, often to the stony silence of the other committee members. See the minutes and the reporter's transcripts collected in Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, Files 2 and 3.

destroyed crops and threw thousands of Imperial Valley domestic farm hands out of work. The Red Cross asked the governor for immediate aid, especially since Imperial County refused to provide any (the county argued that the workers were "migrants" and therefore not the county's responsibility). Warren was unable to intervene, however, because under pressure from state growers, the legislature had never activated the Emergency Relief Act of 1945, which would have given the governor authority to provide cash relief to counties. And yet, during this crisis, some six thousand braceros not only continued working in the Imperial Valley, but had their contracts extended. Numerous domestic workers responded by moving north in search of work.[10]

And every year more followed.* As to what awaited them, the DoH thought it best to quote a 1911 report, whose "words are descriptive of 1950s conditions in the San Joaquin Valley": "the lot of the migratory workers . . . is in some points worse than slavery. The slave was at least sufficiently nourished to enable him to perform his allotted tasks. He was assured shelter in case of illness; of as much care as a thrifty farmer will give his horse or other domestic animal. They [the migrant farm workers] frequently go hungry and while at work their food is usually of a poor quality, ill prepared."[11] These were conditions, as both farm workers and state investigators knew too well, that killed.†

* The State Department of Employment frequently asserted that the northward migration of domestic workers from the Imperial Valley was due to increasing heat—domestic workers seemingly being incapable of picking crops in hot weather. Using Weather Service data for El Centro, Ernesto Galarza handily dismissed this argument, showing that there was little year-to-year correlation between weather and out-migration. See "The Use of Mexican Contract Nationals and Its Effects on the Employment of Domestic Agricultural Workers in the Imperial Valley," August 1953, pp. 18–19, Galarza Papers, Box 9, File 10.

† While investigators for the Governor's Committee (to be discussed below) could not develop a statistical health index for farm workers, they did argue that infant mortality was an excellent indicator for the overall health of the population and thus used it as a "basic index of the health status of a population." They showed that overall the San Joaquin Valley had "the highest regional infant mortality rate in the State" and that infant mortality from diarrheal infections was "three to three and one-half times the rate for the State as a whole." Taking a five-year average, researchers showed that county rates of infant mortality were fairly closely related to the inverse of urbanization. Imperial County led the pack, with all the top ten being big agribusiness counties, with the exception of Del Norte-Humboldt. The bottom of the pile were Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and the counties ringing San Francisco Bay. Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 228, 254 (appendix IV). See also State of California, Department of Public Health, "Maternal and Child Health in the San Joaquin Valley Area, as Related to the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Families" (1950); "Report to the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Resources Committee" (November 14, 1950), both in Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 20.

Crisis in the San Joaquin: Revealing the Facts of Labor

Governor Warren had no choice but to respond to the statewide reports of infants dying in Kings, Tulare, and Fresno county labor camps as the cotton harvest was coming to a close in 1949. "Earl Warren was in trouble," one key player in the events later recalled. "So Earl Warren decided he had to do something about it and he did, because politically he was vulnerable at the time." Warren first held a brief conference with San Joaquin Valley health officers and cabinet members in his offices on December 19, 1949. Ten days later, a two-day "closed session" was held at Fresno State College. Present were county "Health Department Directors, Nurse Supervisors, Sanitation Officers, Superintendents of Schools, Welfare Department Directors, and County Supervisors," as well as representatives from the state departments of Health and Education, the DoH, and staff from the governor's office. Asked to focus on a key issue—that "the counties in the Valley have 30 percent of all the infant diarrhea and enteritis deaths in the state"—representatives discussed a range of interventions, from making emergency food and money aid available to distressed workers, to including all farm workers within the social security system, to establishing governors' committees to examine the agricultural labor needs in the Valley, to finding ways to rationalize workers' opportunities, to addressing the continuing problem of inadequate housing.[12]

Some emergency aid was provided in the early months of 1950, meeting one of the objectives of the December conference. Little of it, however, went to workers who could not establish residency in Valley counties; at best they received whatever surplus food county welfare agencies received and then passed on to charities for distribution. In most cases, welfare officials declared such surplus provisions "inadequate" to both caloric need and basic nutrition. Meeting another objective, the governor responded to a call of the Central Valley Empire Association (CVEA) (a growers association) to establish a Governor's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley. Established in early March, the Governor's Committee was charged with making "a complete survey of the seasonal worker problem" and to make recommendations on the basis of that survey.[13]

The everyday business of the committee was overseen by Professor Paul Prasow, an economist on loan from the University of Southern California. J. Earl Coke (then director of Agricultural Extension for California, former vice president at Spreckles Sugar, and officer in California Field Crops, Inc., the first bracero importers, and later an assistant secretary in the Eisenhower USDA and a powerful member of Ronald Reagan's gubernatorial cabinet) served as

chairman. Warren assured organized labor's involvement by appointing Chester Clay, the secretary of the Fresno Federated Trades and Labor Council, as its vice chairman, and Neil Haggerty, the secretary of the CFL, as a member. Other members included three powerful growers (the FPC's Frank Shay, cotton grower J. E. O'Neill, and Joseph Kimble of the CVEA); two college presidents; the director of the Giannini Foundation; the chair of the Veterans Employment Commission of the American Legion in San Bernardino; a religious leader; members of key state departments; and a representative of the Urban League. While Warren went to great lengths to assure a black representative and a representative for military veterans, there was no Hispanic member, nor apparently any discussion of one, despite the fact that most of the families of the infants who died were Mexican American.[14]

The committee was charged with making "an overall-study of the seasonal worker problem, including employment, health, housing (on-farm and off-farm), and education; and recommend[ing] such joint, cooperative and public action as may be necessary and appropriate to provide these workers with a better standard of living." Despite the fact this was to be at least the 73rd commission, council, or committee just since 1909 to examine the problems related to farm work in the United States that produced reports and made recommendations for its betterment—committees ranging from Presidential Commissions to labor councils, Senate investigations to church committees—high hopes were held that this Governor's Committee would finally *do something* about the longstanding problem of impoverished farm workers in the state.* The committee sought to meet its charge by requisitioning a series of studies by key state agencies (housing, employment, agriculture, education, etc.), holding public hearings in Valley cities, and meeting in camera to discuss the findings of the reports and testimony of hearings and then to make concrete recommendations. Early in its deliberations the committee outlined sixteen key areas for research, including studies of the structure of seasonal labor demand, work patterns and annual earnings of farm workers, housing, environmental health, the question of extending unemployment insurance to farm workers, and the practices of labor contractors, among others.[15]

* The wording in the quotation is from a joint resolution sent to the governor by the CVEA and the San Joaquin Valley Commissioners Association. Warren adopted this wording as the committee's charge, adding to it that it was "to examine the problem in all its aspects, and to propose permanent means for dealing with it." The seventy-fourth such commission would be struck only three months later when President Truman established the President's Commission on Migratory Labor. The CVEA resolution is reprinted in Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 296.

Reports were indeed commissioned and hearings held, and the results were damning. Though growers frequently trumpeted the fact that hourly, and during the season, monthly, average wages for farm workers were higher in California than the national average—claiming sometimes even that they were the highest in the nation—and that their housing "is superior to that furnished in any other part of the nation," studies of wages and housing in the Valley showed a more complex, and not at all salubrious picture. Researchers found that annual earnings (including earnings from nonfarm work) of seasonal workers (who comprised 46% of the agricultural labor force) were about 63 percent of full-time agricultural workers (who were only 23% of the Valley's farm workers). Full-time farm workers earned an average of $1,900 per year, while the annual earnings of seasonal workers were $1,200.* Nationally, the gap between the earnings of farm workers and the earnings of factory workers was widening significantly. Between 1910 and 1914, hourly farm work wages averaged 67 percent of factory work wages; by 1950, hourly farm work only brought 37 percent of that of factory work. The difference in annual earnings (again at the national level) was even more stark, with farm workers at best earning 22 percent of factory workers. Factory workers in 1949 averaged $2,600, while migratory farm workers averaged $514 and nonmigratory farm workers averaged $520 (with "perquisites" such as housing thrown in, the averages rose to $550 and $580, respectively). By these national standards, California farm workers were indeed doing better than their counterparts elsewhere, just as the growers claimed (full-time agricultural workers were making nearly 75% of factory workers nationwide).[16]

But to acknowledge California growers' relatively better pay masks some important trends and caveats. The first (more a caveat than a trend) was the precipitous decline of California wages in 1949. With a baseline of 100 for the 1910–14 average, composite farm wage rates in California in 1948 were 460 (capping a long upward trend that began with the strikes of 1933). In 1949, they were 413 (a 13% decline). In the United States as a whole the 1948 and 1949 values were 432 and 429, respectively (a less than 1% decline). The second (more a

* Of the 46 percent who were season workers, 15 percent were nonlocal; they migrated into the Valley for work. The remaining 31 percent of the labor force were farmers, their families, braceros, and undocumented workers. Mexican National contract workers and undocumented workers were not included in the wage surveys. It should also be pointed out, as the final report of the committee does, that even though some agricultural jobs "may be 'year round,' there is considerable turnover among workers in such jobs." Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 94. $1,900 in 1950 is equivalent to just over $17,000 in 2010 ($1,200 = a little under $11,000), according to the Consumer Price Index.

trend than a caveat) was that this precipitous decline in California farm wages seemed to be accelerating a more secular and longer-term decline of California farm wages *relative* to the rest of the United States. By holding steady U.S. farm wages at index 100 for each year from 1945 to 1949, researchers showed that California fell from index 177 to 160 over those years. California wages were declining in concert with the other Pacific Coast states, it is true, but with the exception of these three, the rest of the country was on an upward march, even in the face of the recession that seemed to be settling in, in 1949. Farm wages, especially in California, were proof of what the President's Commission on Migratory Labor (established immediately after the Governor's Committee) called "a widening inequality."[17]

The report of the Governor's Committee showed that much of the poverty of farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley could be attributed to the fact they simply were unable to work much of the year. At best (and assuming six-day work weeks), workers who engaged in farm work could count on about thirty-one weeks of employment and nearly twenty-one weeks of unemployment each year—more than five months without work. And, in turn, researchers for the BAE—upon whom the California Department of Employment relied heavily in its reports to the Governor's Committee—attributed the low number of days California farm workers could find employment to "the ample labor supply" as well as the "rather unorganized" nature of the labor market. The old tradition, the old fact, the old safeguard, of having a labor surplus at hand in agricultural California persisted.[18]

For their part, many growers attributed worker poverty not to such labor market conditions, but mostly to the profligate and even lazy characteristics of the workers. The CVEA had called for the Governor's Committee in significant part because it thought such a study would vindicate California growers, who "paid the highest wages" in the country. While it admitted that conditions in the San Joaquin Valley were not good (though they were "no worse than that found in areas of our large cities and elsewhere in the nation"), and that indeed, "lack of steady work" played a part in farm worker immiseration, of utmost importance according to the CVEA was workers' lack of "proper budgeting and habits of thrift" and the fact workers "have no other place to go" when the harvest season ended; they failed to disappear when there was no work to be had and thus became a charge on society. "Under federal tax laws and prices of farm produce generally" it simply was "not economically feasible" for an "individual farmer" to take responsibility for profligate farm workers year round if they only employed them seasonally.[19]

At committee hearings farmers asserted over and over that farm workers

"make good money." The problem was that "some farm workers with high seasonal earnings do not lay-by any of these earnings for slack seasons," a position with which Neil Haggerty of the CFL, for one, seemed to agree. Almost uniformly, farmers and representatives of the Farm Bureaus (and in the Grange also) advocated against extension of unemployment insurance to farm workers—arguing that it would encourage them not to seek work in the fields,* and in any event was unworkable for migratory people—and were in favor instead of a compulsory savings plan, ranging from 10 to 20 percent of wages to tide farm workers over during slack times. With such a plan, it was likely, farmers argued, that farm workers would become less of a charge on society, less of a welfare burden, less of an annual crisis during the slack season. Unemployment insurance, by contrast, would encourage a settling down in place that not only encouraged worker laziness but also sapped the flexibility of labor that was so essential to farmers producing vital crops. The problem in the Valley, apparently, was less malnourished children of farm workers and more "chiselers" (to use a term that came up over and over during the hearings).[20]

Growers also made much of the quality of their farm worker housing. Though they admitted there were problems, they also argued they ought to be given credit for "tremendous improvement" in labor camp conditions. Though not necessarily "tremendous"—the Labor Camp Act, after all, was a set of pretty minimal requirements—there was indeed improvement. Agents of the DoH conducted 843 inspections of 703 labor camps (41% of the estimated 1,725 camps) in the San Joaquin between September 1, 1949, and October 31, 1950. After reinspection of 140 of the camps, 405 were rated "good"—that is, in compliance with the Labor Camp Act. Thirty-seven percent were rated "fair" (in partial compliance), and 23 percent were "bad" (significantly not in compliance). Statewide in the period 1945–49 only 29 percent of camp inspections garnered a "good" rating (with the high year, 1949, at only 32%). The 1950 Valley inspections thus showed a marked improvement, one that seemed to be part of a larger trend. In the first eight months of 1950, the statewide percentage of "good" camps jumped to 35 percent. From that point good ratings in monthly inspections rarely dropped below 40 percent.†[21]

* Some growers argued, in fact, that the problem was not too little unemployment insurance, but too much. They complained there were "appreciable numbers of people who draw unemployment insurance checks while working full time in agriculture." Testimony of Cruz Venstrom (CFBF), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Fresno, June 20, p. 45.

† Some of this improvement was surely a function of growers seeking to stave off further bad publicity. Rapid inspections in the first two and a half months of 1950 revealed that in the six counties of the Valley, only 19 percent of inspected camps were "good." In Tulare and Fresno,

If these statistics told one story, however, other statistics told a different one. In the first place, there was in fact only a slim chance any camp would be inspected. The high percentage of camps inspected in the San Joaquin Valley in 1950 was because the DoH responded to demands of the Governor's Committee for data by placing more of its few inspectors there. And they were indeed few. In 1949, there were five inspectors for the whole of San Joaquin Valley ("an area roughly the size of New Jersey"), and in addition to labor camps, they were charged with inspecting auto courts, trailer camps, and all new apartment and hotel construction in unincorporated areas. In 1950, in response to the infant deaths, three more inspectors were assigned to the Valley. Two inspectors were specially assigned to Tulare County to inspect all labor camps, house courts, and tent camps. Between them they inspected two hundred facilities. This inspection showed 22 percent of the camps provided water unsafe for human consumption; 70 percent disposed of their sewage in an unsatisfactory manner; and an equivalent number disposed of their garbage unsatisfactorily (table 5.1). Across the length of the Valley, inspectors found that only 345 of inspected camps had flush toilets (and of these 13% were only partially fitted with flush toilets). Twenty-two percent of camps had no sewage disposal mechanisms at all, not for bodily waste and not for gray water. In seasonal camps, matters were worse: only 14 percent of permanent seasonal and 9 percent of temporary seasonal camps had flush toilets. Twenty-five percent of permanent seasonal and 28 percent of temporary seasonal camps had no bathing facilities at all.[22]

Further increasing chances that a camp would escape inspection was that temporary camps—often "the poorest equipped and lack[ing] proper sanitation faculties"—were frequently out of operation by the time inspectors reached them (during 1951, for example, inspectors called on 359 camps that were "unoccupied, closed for repairs, demolished or abandoned" at the time of inspection, a number equivalent to 8% of the inspections actually made). More important, there was no requirement that labor camps be licensed or registered, and so the burden of finding them fell on DoH inspectors; it was not inconceivable, according to a study of DoH commissioned by the Department of Finance when it approved the extra inspectors for the San Joaquin Valley, that inspectors disproportionately inspected "good" camps, since they were more frequently brought to inspectors' attention.[23] And when they did find the camps, and or-

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the percentage of "good" camps was 14 and 13, respectively. While Kings County boasted a 43 percent "good" rate, only 62 camps were inspected (as compared with 154 in Fresno and 125 in Tulare). Table, "Labor Camp Inspections, January 1, 1950 through March 15, 1950," Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 25.

TABLE 5.1 Labor Camp Conditions, Tulare County, February 1950

	Water Supply		Sewage Disposal		Garbage Disposal	
	Safe	Unsafe	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Labor Camps	103	23	39	87	38	88
House Courts	46	11	19	38	17	40
Tent Camps	4	7	1	10	2	9
Trailer Camps	3	3	2	4	2	4

Source: "Farm Labor Housing Report, Tulare County, February 27, 1950," Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 10.

dered compliance with the Labor Camp Act, they were often subject to strong political pressure to ease off—sometimes political pressure right from the governor's office, even in the midst of a crisis rooted precisely in those conditions.*

Second, health officials in the Valley had conclusively linked the infant deaths to bad sanitary conditions in the camps, and argued that the elevated rates of infant mortality in the southern San Joaquin were directly linked to labor housing conditions. Moreover, a report by the chief of the Division of Preventive Medicine in the State Department of Health reported at the end of 1949 that the rate of infant death from diarrhea and enteritis, the proximate causes of death among most of the twenty-eight infants at the heart of the crisis, had "remained constant" over the past several years. The reason, according to the Department of Health, was what it called "environmental sanitation," including "safety and security of the water supply . . . , the manner of excreta disposal, the absence of infected rodent and insect vectors . . . , and a food and milk supply free from contamination," none of which were regularly met within the labor camps of the state. As the department reported, "Persons living in temporary accommodation or substandard housing or labor camps are more apt to be subject to failure in the basic points of environmental sanitation. It is in such sur-

* Even as the governor was responding to the crisis of the infant deaths—realizing he "was in trouble" as Earl Coke put it—his departmental secretary, M. F. Small, was berating the chief of the DoH for his inspectors' "abruptness" in demanding compliance from a Valley farmer. Small was particularly upset the DoH had not provided him with "any evidence . . . that efforts were made to work out the problem" with the camp operator before citing him for Camp Act violations, leaving no doubt about the administration's preferred method of dealing with camp operators who broke the law. Small to McDonough, January 14, 1950, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2299.

roundings that many agricultural workers find themselves for varying periods of time. Although not all labor camps present a risk, except when maintenance or supervision is lax, many camps, however, have been found upon inspection to lack provision for many essential factors or for proper maintenance. The risk to the health of the occupants is corollary." Disease and death was a *function* of labor camp conditions, at least partially, whatever the "tremendous" improvements made by growers over the previous years.[24]

Growers and their allies, predictably, sought to counter these claims by blaming workers for the conditions of the camps. The notoriously eccentric Dr. Lee Stone, long-serving health commissioner for Madera County, told the Governor's Committee that his experience with "migrants has been vast," and on the basis of it, the first thing the committee needed to understand was, notwithstanding the arguments of the state's chief public health officer, "in the main labor camps offer better places of habitation than their occupants had ever in their lives before. . . . They pay no rent, and yet a great number befoul the cabins in which they live to an extent that no self-respecting person would occupy one after the tenants have moved out. . . . I like people, but I do have a definite quarrel with filth, and it is filth that I as a health officer must fight even though there are some who may criticize. . . . I regard them [migrant workers] as unknowledgeable people who need a little human understanding in their hearts to appreciate the problem of public health." Many echoed Dr. Stone's theme but without the "little human understanding" he thought crucial. They complained that workers "do not take care of the property"; they are constantly drunk; "they aren't willing to keep up the place or fix it up for themselves"; they are "destructive and . . . give no thought whatever to the care of the property within which they live, and . . . at times are deliberately vicious in their attacks on those who want to be their friends, namely, the farmers who employ them"; they refuse to use "modern sanitary facilities" when they are offered; "they don't put the garbage in the garbage cans; . . . they tear up the floors in their cabins and burn them up; . . . they don't deliver a full day's work for the money being paid." And then, to top it off, they fail to move on after harvests are over because "they do not want to leave the relatively good, compared to other areas, housing and relief provided in the San Joaquin Valley"; they "loaf" when they "could be working in other districts."[25]

Some growers, farm workers themselves, union representatives, state officials, and other interested citizens contested the dominant grower account. Edward Nichols, an administrative advisor in the Department of Mental Hygiene, felt compelled to remind the committee and those at its hearings that constant reference to farm workers as "these people" and "those folks" was a strategy to

brand farm workers as outsiders, not deserving of membership in the community when in fact "they are just as much a part of the community as the people living in the cities" and deserved to be treated as such. Reed Clegg, the director of the Community Services Center in Fresno, argued that any solution to the problems facing farm workers had to come out of an orientation toward "basic human rights," and must include the right to unionization. Will Swearingen, an NFLU official (and veteran of the DiGiorgio strike), argued that "to say that housing facilities for the valley and county farm workers populace is inadequate is simply a rank understatement of the existing conditions," and contested "the all too commonly held belief that farm workers in general are a sort of nomad class, whose degeneracy and shiftlessness holds them in bondage and frustration," and that blame for poor and dangerous facilities needed to be turned instead toward "the labor contractors and the big farming association[s] who, for the sake of profit and the advantages of exploitation of the workers living in or on their property have consistently fought every attempt by local and governmental agencies to provide decent shelters, if not housing." He pointed in particular to the former federal labor supply camp at Firebaugh, now operated by the West Side Growers Housing Association, where, he claimed, "rents have generally doubled, medical and health hazard control checks discontinued, and a virtual economic and personal slavery reign instituted."[26]

Bertha Rankin, a Kern County cattle rancher and cotton grower, a member of the California Farm Research and Legislative Committee (an "organization of working farmers"), and a longtime advocate for farm workers' interests, argued that "prosperity for farmers is related to prosperity for farm workers," and that the right of farm labor to organize and bargain collectively was imperative, as was the extension of unemployment insurance to farm workers. New programs needed to be developed, she argued, that would assist in farm workers purchasing small plots where they could build houses and grow food for their own use. She also advocated "making payment of subsidies to farmers contingent upon growers paying prevailing wages to their workers who plant, cultivate, and harvest the crops." She opposed the continued importation of braceros. The NFLU's William Becker talked of increasing numbers of farm workers settling down in a "home base, a permanent residence, and a community he calls his own," only to be uprooted, forced to move "from one area to another . . . because there is *no job at home*" and outlined the growing problems associated with the continued expansion of the labor contracting system.[27]

For their trouble, those who contested the dominant grower discourse were frequently red-baited. Already in 1950, within weeks of the committee's first public hearing in Fresno, an anonymous memo showed up in the offices of

the Governor's Committee pointing out that the California Farm Research and Legislative Committee—Bertha Rankin's organization—published the *California Farm Labor Reporter*, the associate editor of which was Helga Weigert. Weigert was said to be the wife of George Lohr, whose "biography appears in PEOPLE'S WORLD of 2/24/47 page one column one: 'Foreign Editor of the PEOPLE'S WORLD.' For the past several years he has been an organizer of the COMMUNIST PARTY in San Diego and member of the Party's State Committee. He became a member of the Communist Party in 1934. (Also see 1948 Tenney Report)." A few weeks later in Visalia, Charles E. Gibbs, executive secretary of the Associated Farmers, opened a committee hearing by noting that one of those "at the press table" in an earlier hearing was a reporter for the *People's World* and that much of Rankin's testimony was based on research by the reporter. He also repeated the charges against Weigert and the California Farm Research and Legislative Committee's *California Farm Reporter*, while also asserting that the NFLU's Swearingen lied about how much he had earned as a farm laborer when he worked at DiGiorgio.[28]

In the wake of the Governor's Committee's public hearings, and fearing their red-baiting and other attempts at discrediting those who went beyond sympathy for farm workers and advocated empowerment had not been effective, the CFBF felt compelled to write to the committee to clarify and solidify its position. In the first place, the CFBF argued, the "problem" of agricultural labor was "tremendously exaggerated in many respects," and with war in Korea looming, another problem was in fact arising: "a shortage of harvest labor for seasonal crops," not the surplus with which the committee seemed concerned. Government action at this time, therefore, tended toward unacceptable "paternalism." If direct interventions into the lives of agricultural workers were to be made, however, the CFBF argued that welfare should be in the form of make-work projects, or in any event limited to an amount "sufficiently lower than the wage rates of unskilled workmen to retain the incentive for such workmen to continue to work."* Unemployment insurance should not be extended to farm workers since it was "administratively impractical and . . . inevitably involve[s] extreme abuses." While farms should be encouraged to provide decent housing for their workers, the CFBF argued that given the "diverse existing conditions" within which the camps operated, there should be no enforcement of labor codes, but instead a program of education and persuasion. Most important, rather than hassling farmers, it was imperative, given Korea, that the federal

* Any payments, said the CFBF, should not exceed two hundred dollars a month for "a needy family of 8 or more persons," and less for smaller families.

government open up "immediate negotiation of definite agreements with Mexico, and if necessary with other countries, including Japan," for the importation of farm labor; that the FPC be revived; and that the FPS be expanded to meet the growing needs of farmers for workers.[29]

The President's Commission on Migratory Labor also heard the call for continued access to Mexican workers from California farmers. The President's Commission had been established in June, and charged with understanding the conditions faced by migratory workers, "both alien and domestic," whether there was a necessity for labor importation, the extent of illegal immigration, and other issues. It held a series of public hearings around the country, including one in August in Los Angeles. Keith Mets, president of the IVFA, one of the largest importers of Mexican National labor, told the commission at its Los Angeles hearing that labor importation would always be necessary—the need was growing with the latest war emergency—and that the real problem was the "red tape" associated with the importation of Mexican workers. What was needed instead was a "crossing card system, a white card," that would let Mexican National workers come and go across the border as needed. Mets argued that in the whole history of the bracero program, negotiations have consistently "been settled in favor to the Mexican at the expense of the American farmer" as witnessed particularly by the fact that "the agencies negotiating for the farmer have given concessions to the Mexican worker above and beyond the concessions given to the American farm worker."[30]

The NFLU's Ernesto Galarza countered that this was just another attempt by growers to create "a completely elastic farm labor pool which could be marshaled on a few hours' notice." Galarza, the *New York Times* reported, "severely criticized the recent United States–Mexico agreement for labor importation under certification of shortages as inequitable alike to Mexican workers . . . the Mexican Government and domestic workers." Galarza, in some sense, agreed with Mets that the problem was imported Mexican workers were better protected than domestic workers, at least formally, but turned the argument around, stating that domestic workers needed fuller protection. He also "attacked the traditional orientation of growers that there were a number of types of 'stoop' labor that domestic workers could not or would not do, commenting that wage levels were seldom mentioned in discussions of labor availability."[31]

Members of the Governor's Committee also testified at the Los Angeles hearings. Neil Haggerty, representing the CFL, argued for including farm workers in labor and unemployment legislation, the need to end the bracero program, and the need to stop illegal immigration. Committee Executive Director Paul Prasow, who attended the hearings, reported to M. F. Small, the governor's de-

partmental secretary, that "commission members seemed quite sympathetic to Mr. Haggerty's presentation." Committee member Charles Schottland, speaking as the director of the California Department of Social Welfare, argued for the need for "employment stabilization," rather than emergency relief. Small reported to the governor that (according to Prasow) neither labor unions nor growers seemed particularly happy with the conduct of the hearing, with growers averring "they had little confidence in the 'fairness and objectivity of this Commission' and that requests had already been made to the U.S. House of Representatives that a special congressional committee be established to hold hearings on agricultural labor with particular emphasis on the problem of recruiting Mexican labor in the counties south of the Tehachapis."[32]

What impressed Prasow the most, however, was the testimony of a labor contractor, Rene Cardenas, "whose information was new and fundamental to both inquiries." Prasow told Small:

> Mr. Cardenas is a farm labor contractor who appears to be intimately familiar with all aspects of recruiting and placing of agricultural labor, domestic and alien, both legal and illegal. He was amazingly frank and did not spare himself from blame. He stated that he regularly recruited thousands of illegal Mexican immigrants, sometimes through the California Department of Employment. He pointed out that there was little enforcement by state or federal officials with respect to the standards and labor codes to protect agricultural labor. He stated that in many cases the unlicensed farm labor contractors would end up with the workers' total payroll through deductions for liquor, women, and narcotics.[33]

The Governor's Committee later arranged to hear directly from Cardenas, who was asked to testify at the September hearing in Merced.

Cardenas operated his labor-contracting business out of Redwood City, in the southern part of the San Francisco peninsula, but he had contracted workers up and down the state and into Idaho, Michigan, and Washington, frequently for the giant California Packing Corporation (CalPak, known to consumers as Del Monte). At the moment he had contracts to pick tomatoes on five hundred acres around Tracy, in the northern part of the San Joaquin Valley. In his contracting,

> we have always invariably tried to work Mexican nationals or wetbacks or whatever you want to call them, inasmuch as the facilities at hand, that the companies have offered, such as housing and eats, have been favorable to recruiting and working this type of labor. We have run upon several occasions into trouble with the Immigration Service inasmuch as they might have come in and cleaned up

> our camp at a crucial time, when we might have needed this labor. We have been criticized considerably, the contractors have, for using this type of labor. However we have suffered experiences by going into Arizona and Texas and bringing in Mexican fellows of American birth into California . . . and subsequently suffered heavy transportation losses in these men inasmuch as they had as their only aim getting to California . . . to go work somewhere else, or visit a relative, and subsequently contracted with us and left when we most needed them. So, due to [that] fact, we have used the Mexican National.

In response to questioning from the committee, Cardenas clarified that the "National" he was talking about was in fact a "wetback," found "in the camps or out in town." (Edward Hayes of the FPS weighed in to point out that "the great majority of [undocumented workers] at some time or other have been contract labor and they subsequently went back to Mexico and come back as wetbacks. That is the only difference there"—making clear the essential porosity of the contract labor system.)[34]

Domestic workers, according to Cardenas, were "reactionary," meaning they reacted to changes in work conditions by "more or less embrac[ing] themselves with the unions." Undocumented workers, by contrast, were "less reactionary due to their position, illegal position here in the United States. We can control them inasmuch as, assuming now in our current work, if they rebel and join the labor ranks, the union labor ranks, they would be sacrificing themselves to deportation inasmuch as they would have no right to band together in strength. With that more or less cudgel of fear over their head, they do seem to hold their place more." Cardenas suggested that at least "from Los Angeles north," the issue was not wages; undocumented workers tended to be paid the same as domestic workers. The important fact was undocumented workers "are more advantageous to us in as much [sic] as we can control them better and when we are at a critical point like we are now, dealing with a perishable crop, we have got to get that crop out regardless of how we get it out, so if we have to resort to methods of intimidation or whatever it is, it behooves to, inasmuch as we are at a loss if we do not."[35]

No plainer statement of the facts of labor—of how the system worked in California, and thus *why* domestic workers found it impossible to get steady, decent-paying, and dignified work—could be imagined. "Mexican Nationals," whether legally imported or illegally contracted, not only labored under a "cudgel of fear," they were *used* as a cudgel against those workers who, as the NFLU's Becker put it, sought to develop a "home base" and to form a "community," and certainly against those who sought to join a union. And the NFLU was deter-

mined to contest exactly this system, exactly this practice, not only (and certainly not primarily) at hearings like those held by the Governor's Committee and the President's Commission, but in the fields themselves, applying pressure precisely at what Cardenas called the "critical point."

Labor's Struggles

Already the NFLU had gone on the offensive against the use of both braceros and undocumented workers. Back in February, in the Coachella Valley south of Palm Springs, the local growers association noted it was receiving a great deal of criticism for its use of Mexican Nationals. Admitting that many local workers were unemployed, it noted that they were turning to the union, and the union was "not overlooking every error that the employer make[s] in the use of Mexican workers. They have been able to present cases where the growers have underpaid the Mexican," which might be a boon to farmers but was "also a strong point of the argument to state that we are using the program to lower the wage rates and consequently lower the standard of living." However, according to the manager of the association, "despite all that has been said and done to stop . . . the use of Mexican Nationals, we have been assured by State Officials that they are in sympathy with our request to employ them." There was a critical condition, however: "from this date on" growers must "make every effort to give work to domestics unemployed who ask for employment in the same capacity as the Nationals. The fact the domestics or locals constitute an unstable source of labor pool or that they are not the desireable [sic] employee is no reason for employers to reject them." Seeking to make the best of the situation, the manager argued that it was time to begin screening the local labor pool for good workers, since "the importation of foreign workers must end some day." He thus proposed a screening system to be run out of the association office.[36]

The NFLU had other ideas. It thought the union ought to perform this "screening" function. It sought in particular to take full advantage of a new USES policy requiring "state recruitment plans [to] include both organized and unorganized sources of supply in meeting the labor demands of farmers both locally and statewide." Beginning in April 1950, local FPS offices were instructed to contact area representatives of the NFLU "before originating requests for certification of need for foreign workers so that these representatives may be afforded the opportunity to refer to the local offices qualified applicants whom they contend are available." FPS staff were further instructed that "all future requests for certification of need for foreign workers should indicate action taken in this regard." The State Department of Employment instructed its local

FPS officers, "when orders are received for workers that you have difficulty in filling, or which involve a certification for Mexican Nationals, the appropriate representative of the National Farm Labor Union shall be contacted . . . and requested to refer any unemployed members or workers to our office for referral to the job opening."[37]

At the beginning of May, concerned that the Imperial Valley FPS representative, Tom Finney, was "evasive as to oral promises," Galarza took "the liberty of summarizing" in writing "the points we agreed on" and asked Finney for his "confirmation, amendment, or clarification." According to Galarza, the FPS in the Imperial agreed local workers would be given priority over "workers from other areas," that the local NFLU would be among those organizations "canvassed, with reasonable advanced notice, in filling requests for local farm labor," that local workers would not be discriminated against in opportunities for higher-paid and more-skilled work, that "employers or their agents who are known to be using Nationals in any capacity in preference to local available labor are to be notified that they are in violation of the International Executive Agreement and steps are to be taken by the Employment Service if such employers persist in this practice," that the use of undocumented workers was to be "actively discouraged," and that referrals to jobs lasting less than six hours would not be made because they "are not regarded as an acceptable American standard of employment because of the extremely low income such hours provide."[38]

Such accommodationist language masked a more steely determination to use the new consultation requirement to create a "hiring hall system in the Imperial Valley." At an April 13 meeting of the executive boards of the Imperial Valley NFLU locals, the locals agreed to coordinate their actions across the whole Valley, with the office of the El Centro local acting as the clearinghouse. They agreed on a set of procedures, including seniority lists, and methods for recruiting new members in the process of filling farm labor orders. In support of the hiring halls the union planned a coordinated "drive to get reports on all ranches in the Valley," in which both current union members would make reports and new members applying at the halls would be told (if there was no immediate work available) "that [they] can help speed things up by going out to get the information the Union needs on the Nationals. . . . The purpose of this is to get each workers [sic] to go out and help create his own job instead of waiting around for the job to be found by someone else." The locals also developed a "'pin point' plan of raids" on farms using undocumented workers. Galarza reminded the officials of the Imperial Valley locals that the USES consultation requirement was "the most important break that the Union has had in California" and that it should not be lost.[39]

Growers understood this was an important break for the union too, and quickly mobilized to neutralize it. Spearheaded by C. B. Moore of the Western Growers Association, growers worked through the State Board of Agriculture (always an ally of farmers), and engaged in a telephone campaign to the governor's office to have the consultation process withdrawn. Among the most vociferous in opposition was the State Chamber of Commerce's Don McColly, the old FPC chief, who threatened "dire political consequences" if the practice of consulting with unions continued. According to the governor's secretary, "the burden of all [the complaints] was that the Department of Employment was aiding and abetting the unionization of agriculture in California." The pressure yielded an immediate response. James Bryant, the director of the Department of Employment, working with the FPS's Edward Hayes and Don Roney, the chief of the Division of Public Employment Offices, drew "up a 'clarifying memorandum'" making it clear that "labor organizations" in general (and not necessarily the NFLU in particular) were to be "included" when certification of need for braceros was being determined. When Bryant presented the revised procedures to the Board of Agriculture, the "Board demanded the deletion of all references to organized labor," a demand led by the Chamber of Commerce's McColly, who publicly charged the state government with hatching a "farm union plot." When he learned of this, the CFL's Haggerty agreed there was no need to mention the NFLU, but the reference to "organized labor" had to stay, according to a report by M. F. Small.* Citing "the heat from" labor, Bryant told McColly he would issue the "clarifying memo," which led to a series of angry calls to the governor from McColly, Frank Shay, and others.†[40]

The USES and the State Department of Employment buckled. On May 24, the order that local FPS offices consult with the NFLU in their areas was rescinded. Now they were instructed only that "recruitment methods and sources of do-

* The NFLU's William Becker wrote directly to McColly, saying the union was "sorry that you felt called on to oppose the directive" of the USES, and asking for cooperation from the Chamber of Commerce in helping "farm workers to achieve a more stable and healthy life." Becker to McColly, Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9. See also Gladwin Hill, "Coast Unrest over Farm Labor: Strikes, Problems of Migrant Camps Stir Valley—U.S., State Officials Clash," *New York Times*, May 21, 1950, 48.

† This "heat" also included H. L. Mitchell working in Washington, who contacted Robert Goodwin, the head of the USES. Goodwin informed Mitchell that the USES was "sticking by its guns," but that the NFLU ought to "take this with a grain of salt." Mitchell also talked with an aide to California Representative John Shelley, and prepared a letter to Secretary of Labor Tobin, President Truman, the USES Advisory Council, and others. Mitch to Hank, Ernesto & Bill, March 18, 1950; Mitchell to Haggerty, May 19, 1950, both in Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9; Galarza to Warren, May 20, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

mestic labor to be contacted specifically include growers' associations who might have a surplus of workers, labor camps and Mexican settlements, use of mobile equipment, labor unions which may have unemployed workers available, press and radio facilities, and other sources and methods as may appear productive." Placement officers were required, among other things, to keep a "list of unions contacted and results obtained." A day later, the BES, which oversaw USES activity in California, made it explicit to Galarza that any "oral agreement . . . reached with your locals in the Imperial Valley"—the "oral promises" from Tom Finney that Galarza worried about back in April—were moot. "Our conversations with labor representatives in the Valley," the BES's Glenn Brockway wrote, "was merely a restatement of . . . policy, and not an agreement for the particular benefit of workers in Brawley or any other area," a position confirmed in detail when Galarza finally received a response to his April letter to Finney on June 14, 1953.[41]

The policy now seemed to be for California Department of Employment agents to write to union officers asking them to refer any unemployed workers they may know of for open job interviews. One letter, for example, asked Galarza to refer to the nearby San Jose employment offices any workers interested in "beet and lettuce thinning, strawberry picking, hand vegetable planting and hoeing and cherry picking." No mention is made of the wages to be paid or anything else about work conditions, though a letter sent to Galarza in San Jose seeking workers for distant locales—Whittier, Orange County, and Ventura County—did mention wages (generally a sixty-five cents per hour minimum). The union immediately complained that these letters typically allowed at most one day to refer workers, which was unreasonable, especially since requests asked workers to travel "some distance and temporarily mov[e] from home." The NFLU suspected that the Employment Service, in the wake of this controversy, was trying "to put us on the spot on their referals [sic] through us. It might even be part of a build up by them, under pressure from the citrus growers, to give them an excuse to bring in a large number of the Filipinos now in Hawaii" for work in the citrus orchards of Southern California.[42]

The union's concerns were not misplaced. When few potential workers were immediately forthcoming from the union locals in Northern California and the Imperial for jobs in the Southern California citrus belt, the Department of Employment asked the BES for rapid certification of Mexican Nationals, despite the fact that at least some of the employers were now suggesting they had no need for additional workers.* In the midst of this controversy, Galarza requested a

* Bryant to Brockway, June 8, 1950; Becker to Hayes, June 12, 1950, both in Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9. Becker cast doubt on the good faith of the California Department of Employ-

meeting with representatives of the BES and the Department of Employment, which was eventually held in June. At this meeting Bryant agreed to investigate the "reported refusal" of Whittier orange growers "to employ, or consider for employment, workers supplied by a NFLU local to employment office."* Hayes confirmed that "qualified domestic workers would be referred for employment to any employer having Mexican Nationals under contract" under the understanding that such domestic workers would replace Nationals, if necessary.† However, Hayes also reaffirmed a rule allowing the NFLU only forty-eight hours to respond to demands for workers. The presumed reason for this was that harvest labor demand shifted rapidly and growers could not be expected to know in detail their labor demands on a longer time horizon than that, a curious position since requests for Mexican Nationals—based on a certified shortage of domestic labor—were made weeks, and up to six months, before the actual deployment of braceros.[43]

Under further union pressure, the Department of Employment agreed in a meeting to require growers to make requests for braceros at least thirty days before they would be needed (giving the union time to contest the request), but in practice, it did not seem to follow through. These matters came to a head in early September 1950—the critical moment to which labor contractor Cardenas pointed. Some fifty thousand people had descended on the northern San Joaquin Valley tomato district and, by and large, lived in camps provided by labor contractors like him. Though growers and contractors had not yet met to determine a prevailing wage, it was likely they would settle on a wage of twelve cents per fifty-pound box, with two cents withheld as a "bonus" for

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ment and the BES in a letter to Brockway in August. Brockway had informed Becker that many of his actions were based on a letter from Bryant written on May 26. Becker shows that the information Brockway says was in this purported letter could not have been, since it was not available as of that date. Becker to Brockway, August 22, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9. For their part, growers complained to the governor that the Department of Employment was not doing enough to secure workers for the citrus crop, a complaint to which the governor responded, solicitously, through his departmental secretary; Small to Tolbert, n.d. [fall 1950], Warren Papers, Employment, File 1216.

* The Fresno and Bakersfield locals managed to send a number of workers to Whittier to fill the standing order for citrus workers; the workers were properly referred to the growers by the employment office. According to the union, they were rejected out of hand by the growers. Becker to Swearingen, Galarza, Hasiwar, Tarr, Myatt, Williams, July 10, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9.

† As we will see, this replacement policy, never consistently enforced, was a constant focus of intense struggle from both the grower and labor sides for the remainder of the program, with strikes and other direct action often organized directly in relation to it.

workers who stayed the season—essentially the same rate as that of 1949. Pickers, increasingly restive, had expressed themselves unsatisfied. At a September 6 meeting, two days before the growers were scheduled to meet, Tracy Local 300 of the NFLU (newly formed) agreed that eighteen cents was a reasonable rate, especially since the canneries were paying growers more than they had the previous year, and demanded an end to the bonus system, which was a source of frequent abuse. And they were gearing up for a fight. The union complained that families were already being evicted from growers' and contractors' camps for their union activities.[44]

Expecting this move, Galarza had sought to ascertain the legal rights of workers in the camps. Some workers lived in camps rent-free. In such camps, attorneys for the union informed Galarza, tenancy of residents was "tenancy at will," meaning they could be removed at any time and for any or no reason. (An argument could be made that the "benefit" a grower received from having his employees at hand was a form of rent, but then all the employer would have to do is fire the employees and they could be removed, since that "rent" would "cease upon the cessation of employment.") However, if any direct charges were made to the residents—a small weekly rent, for example—"then there is specifically a 'tenancy for a term'" and a formal "note to quit" would have to be given and the resident allowed to stay until the end of the term. Galarza was hoping to keep workers in their camps for as long as possible and to operate the strike, if there was to be one, from within them. He was also preparing to aggressively fight evictions. Indeed, he was preparing to fight a strike that, he later wrote, probably should not have been called: Local 300 had "no treasury, no strike fund, no regular staff, and only a token membership base." The problem of undocumented workers—who could fairly easily be used, as Cardenas so carefully explained, as strikebreakers—would also have to be confronted head on. "The illegals who were in the area were to be regarded at first as fellow workers, appealed to and asked to leave the area voluntarily; if wetback scabbing became serious, Local 300 would denounce the employers who were using illegals." The union hoped such denunciation would lead undocumented workers "to automatically flee the strike area, as they always have, creating a problem for the growers." Whatever the concerns about the viability of a strike, by September 11, responding to mounting pressure from the grassroots, Galarza wired Mitchell in Washington, asking for strike authorization for tomato pickers in the Tracy area. Mitchell provided his authorization the following day—September 12, the very day Rene Cardenas was testifying before the Governor's Committee fifty miles south in Merced.[45]

Simultaneously, Galarza informed "all tomato growers in the Tracy area"

that negotiations with contractors had failed—only three contractors agreed to meet with the union, and they refused to negotiate their twelve-cent wage, claiming that wages were set by the growers. Galarza promised to help avert a strike if growers would work directly with the union, which would "cooperate in recruiting competent, stable labor, and . . . take part in a joint grievance procedure that will help eliminate many of the causes of quitting and skipping." The union proposed, in other words, an end to the contract system and its replacement with direct grower-union dealings. As with similar entreaties to DiGiorgio three years earlier, the union's efforts were met with silence. Expecting this, Galarza also appealed to the Bureau of Reclamation for the use of a vacant camp in nearby Vernalis to house evicted, striking workers (the request went unanswered); he also appealed to Governor Warren for tents for another camp he was hoping to establish in the strike district. The latter request provoked a set of discussions and debates within the governor's office with it finally being decided "it was not in the power of the State Government" to provide housing to a union or for striking workers, and that any camps that were established by strikers would have to be vigorously policed for conformance to the Labor Camp Act.[46]

By September 14, Local 300 had voted to go on strike and workers laid down their tools the following day, appealing to local merchants to support the strike since "good wages mean steady business because the working people spend for the necessities of life." The union claimed that 3,500 pickers, in an area stretching from Brentwood in the north to Patterson in the south, walked off their jobs, with between 80 and 90 percent of the acreage in the area affected. Rather than a complete shutdown, though, Galarza called the strike a "major slowdown" and completely broke union members and their families were allowed to engage in intermittent picking to tide them through the strike. Still, strikers estimated that some eight million pounds of tomatoes a day were not being picked as a result of the strike; growers responded that any slowdown was due to an early-season rainstorm, and not the strike.[47]

They also responded by working with contractors to rapidly recruit undocumented workers. The union protested to the Mexican ambassador to the United States, as well as to the governor, the secretary of labor, and the President's Commission on Migratory Labor. And it asked the Department of Employment and BES to confirm or deny "press reports" that braceros were being recruited for work in the struck harvest. The FPS's Hayes replied by saying that no certification of Nationals had been requested or granted for work in San Joaquin County, and that if there was "any border recruiting" then it was without the government's knowledge (and as they frequently made clear there was nothing

they could do about it if there were). There is no doubt that there was indeed recruiting of undocumented workers, and the union complained they were being escorted through the picket lines by armed guards. Responding to complaints from Mitchell about the use of undocumented workers by contractors to break the strike, Secretary of Labor Maurice Tobin asked the INS on September 19 to investigate immediately. A day later, INS officials in Washington called their San Francisco office to order an investigation. As of October 11, however, the INS in San Francisco had taken no action on the secretary's request—by which time the strike had been settled—though it did seem to have engaged in sporadic raids in the early days of the strike (and Galarza himself was called to Stockton to prove his citizenship).[48]

Striking workers were confronted not only with contractors' quite unfettered ability to recruit scabs, but also with stringent policing of San Joaquin County's antiparading and antinoise ordinances (despite their brethren laws having already been struck down in the southern part of the Valley) that made it nearly impossible to organize the caravans necessary to picket such an enormous strike area. They also faced Teamster collusion with the cannery owners. On October 2, Hank Hasiwar deployed picketers to the gates of the H. J. Heinz cannery in Tracy, which was accepting scab-picked tomatoes. Rank-and-file Teamsters refused to cross the line and idled their trucks outside the factory gate. The truckers were quickly ordered through the gate by Teamster officials—who claimed they were obliged to keep the cannery canning—and the NFLU was severely reprimanded by the San Joaquin County Central Labor Council for picketing the plant. The Central Labor Council (rather retroactively) decided that its approval of NFLU organizing limited its picketing activities to the fields. Finally, the union also had to confront an increasing number of braceros, who, according to Galarza, were being deployed to the area despite federal and state assurances to the contrary. Contracted to the San Joaquin Growers Association, they were deployed throughout the region, often in mixed crews of braceros and undocumented workers (itself a violation of the international agreement). Some of them were housed in the empty Bureau of Reclamation camp the union had earlier been refused.[49]

Despite all that was stacked against them, strikers won—if not all they wanted, then a fair amount. On September 27, with ripening tomatoes not being picked fast enough (the "critical point" had been reached), the first contractor broke ranks, agreeing to eighteen cents a box and an end to the bonus system. The union opened talks with other contractors and growers, and by October 5, the eighteen-cent, no bonus, wage had become general (though growers at-

tributed this to the normal working of "supply and demand" as the season wore on). Workers were jubilant. Galarza was worried. He feared the end of the harvest would sap the union's stability in the area, even among resident domestic workers, as locals and migrants moved on to other harvests—like the cotton harvest just getting under way to the south. California, thought Galarza, was just too "damn big," and even with something of a victory in a short, early strike in the cotton fields (raising the wage to $3.50 per 100 pounds of cotton picked on October 3) sustained organization—workers' power that spread not just across the state, but which was retained over the slack season and did not have to be created anew the next season—seemed chimerical.[50]

While, as Galarza later argued, this strike, affecting less than 20 percent of the state's tomato acreage, had shown that a well-planned strike aimed at a whole crop could have significant effects, this was a lesson learned not only by workers, but by growers too, who immediately went to work to assure that local and domestic workers would be replaced by braceros in the future (by the end of the decade, the percentage of Mexican Nationals in the canning tomato labor force would approach 90%; at no point in the postwar period did domestic workers exceed 35%). With domestic workers facing newfound pressure from recruited braceros and undocumented workers, more and more were forced on the road in search of work, undermining exactly the "resident farm labor families" who would have to form the basis of any stable union local.[51]

Casual or Decasualized Labor?

Growers' ability to replace domestic workers with braceros and undocumented workers was by no means assured, especially under existing practices. As the Governor's Committee wound down its work at the end of 1950—its long year of commissioning extensive and incisive reports on every aspect of the farm labor system (from housing and health to labor contractors and liquor laws), holding hearings, and parsing data—it unanimously recommended "the Governor, in concert with other western governors, request the Federal Government increase their border patrol," while making no recommendation on the advisability of continuing to recruit contract Nationals (though in its final report it did write that "it has been suggested that the door be left open" for the continuation of the program). The President's Commission was a little more surefooted. While it seemed to endorse labor importation, it argued strongly against the practice of "drying out" "wetbacks." It argued that if there was to be labor importation, the INS ought to serve "as the principal contracting agency."

It also strongly advocated for prevailing wages to be determined in public hearings, not by growers associations alone.* Few of these provisions were likely to garner California grower support.[52]

And following a meeting in the governor's office in December among labor and management officials called to address the "Korea Situation," the proposed governor's statement that resulted made no mention of labor importation as a contemplated solution to projected increases in "manpower requirements for agriculture." M. F. Small assured Galarza that joint labor-management committees were being established to "consider all questions of manpower," and that the CFL's Haggerty would be able to assure him that "the interests of organized labor will be protected." But in an internal memo on the meeting, on Small's desk even as he wrote to Galarza, the assistant chief of the Division of Public Employment assured Small that the governor's meeting had agreed, among its "principal points," that

> **2.** *The agricultural labor supply must be supplemented by imported labor.*
>
> Importation might be from Mexico, Hawaii, or other sources. . . . Labor represented indicated that labor would support a request for importation of foreign workers if proper controls were maintained and an adequate justification of their need clearly shown.

And a little more than a month later, the California Department of Employment was already informing the governor that "*developments have created an urgency that agriculture contracts for off-shore labor be developed at the earliest possible moment. Any delay in consummating these arrangements will hurt California, particularly since the use of off-shore labor by other Pacific Slope states is of a seasonal nature and their demands peak very sharply later in the year. In contrast, because of California's more divergent agricultural economy our needs are for a longer period of time and more constant. California should, therefore, be in a position to be meeting those needs at the earliest possible moment.*"[53]

Indeed, Bryant had already approved the first importation of Filipino workers from Hawaii in response to a request from the head of the State Board of Agriculture. The importation was not, in fact, in response to any certified need, but rather "to process a test order to work out the procedure that will have

* There is some evidence that the recommendation for public hearings was prompted in part by Galarza's exposé of the standard practice in California, and the FPS's eventual admission that it "do[es] not think there is a prevailing wage that can be referred to for California Agriculture." Hayes to Galarza, December 1, 1950; Galarza to Bryant, November 28, 1950; Galarza to Fuller, December 5, 1950, all in Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

to be available when the need for agricultural workers becomes pressing." According to Bryant, "the 300 Filipinos under the test actually would not arrive in California until about May 1, and that there would be a genuine need at that time." For Bryant—perhaps with the blessing of highly placed labor officials like Haggerty—"certified" or "genuine" need was indeed the abstract "availability pure and simple" Galarza argued it should not be. The crisis now was not infants dying in the San Joaquin, nor even the grinding poverty attendant upon irregular work and regular, appalling living conditions that report after commissioned report showed was the lot of farm workers in California. Now the crisis was, again, farmers crying loudly about an impending labor shortage.[54]

As a result, the future would not see the "decasualization" Fisher talked about only a couple of years later, and that the Governor's Committee itself would put at the heart of its solution to the crises of farm work its investigations revealed, but instead a heightened casualization that would redefine the agricultural landscape during the 1950s.

Determination

Labor's Geography

LANDSCAPES ARE PRODUCED. To state the obvious, they are produced by people working, or more accurately, by working people, working classes. Of course, all kinds of diverse labor goes into any production process, whether the finite production of a specific commodity or the ongoing production of a landscape—labor ranging from the work of planning and managing to the work (in agriculture) of planting and harvesting—but only the physical transformation of matter is primary. All the planning in the world makes no difference at all if there are not physical laborers to put that plan into action; all the work of getting laborers to the point of production in roughly appropriate numbers at roughly the right price for roughly the right duration is for naught if the workers do not set themselves to work; all the amassing of capital, all the amassing of machines (at the edge of a field or on the shop floor) is for naught, if working people are not there to operate the machines and turn the capital into a commodity. No doubt the work of labor contractors (like Rene Cardenas), capitalist farmers (like Joseph DiGiorgio or his nephew Robert), and government bureaucrats (like Edward Hayes) is *necessary* (in capitalism), but not only is it insufficient for producing a profitable landscape, it is dependent on the primary labor of the working classes.

Working people literally, physically, make the worlds, the geographies, within which they live. They do so under specific, struggled over, and determinant conditions. The worlds—the landscapes—they make in turn comprise a significant part of those determinant conditions. They establish the grounds (again literally, physically) upon which struggle can take place. To not at all coin a phrase, working people make their own geographies, but not necessarily under conditions of their own choosing. These conditions—these determinations—as Raymond Williams made so clear, are best understood as "pressures" or "limits" rather than dictates or iron laws; they have the force to shape, but not to totally decide.[1]

Determinations themselves are historically, socially, and geographically determined as Williams also made clear when describing the scope of change experienced in nineteenth-century rural Britain, a description that also indicates the *limits* of people's ability to make their own histories and geographies:

> In many villages, community only became a reality when economic and political rights were fought for and partially gained, in the recognition of unions, in the extension of the franchise, and in the possibility of entry into new representative and democratic institutions. In many thousands of cases, there is more community in the modern village, as a result of this process of new legal and democratic rights, than at any point in the recorded or imagined past. This is active community, and it must be distinguished from another version, which is sometimes the mutuality of the oppressed, and other times the mutuality of people living at the edges or in the margins of a generally oppressive system.

Rural workers in Britain "fought for and partially gained" a set of rights and recognitions, reworked the determinations governing their lives, and, in the processes created, if only partially and in a struggle that never ended, a new geographical basis for what Williams called their "lived lives."[2]

The recognition that workers, in the act of living and working, produce the world (or more narrowly, the morphological and social landscape) has had a transformative effect on the way geographers conceptualize the spatiality of the political economy. David Harvey (especially, but not singularly) showed that any social system had to produce the material basis of its existence, and that in capitalism, there was a crucial, contradictory logic to the production of space. As we have seen, Harvey's central insight was that for capital to circulate—and this is obviously a historical necessity—some capital had to be fixed in place, ossified as a "not-value" necessary to the production of new value. The sunk costs that are the built landscape thus enable the development and expansion of capitalist production, but they also constrain it: they pressure and limit. They give capitalist production and reproduction a trajectory; or, in other words, there is a "path-dependency" to the future precisely because the future must contend with what is already there, already built. To transform or remake the landscape can be an expensive if (frequently) necessary business. Yet, the strong arguments of Harvey, focusing so forcefully on the logic, and logistics, of capitalist circulation (through its various moments of production, reproduction, realization, etc.) seemed, at least to some, to underplay the *primary* work and role of working people. In much of the Marxian-inspired political economy of the 1980s and 1990s, it seemed, the work of managing capital took precedence over the labor of workers, and in so doing tended, like much neoclassical economics, to reduce labor to a "factor of production," rather than recognizing it as a living, breathing collection (and sometimes collective) of people whose bodies were a repository for a commodity—labor power—at once just like other commodities *and also* not like other commodities. If, as Harvey argued, capital al-

ways had to search out new "spatial fixes"—new arrangements of fixed, ossified capital—to ameliorate or delay its crises, then, as a new generation of "labor geographers" (most important, Andrew Herod) argued, so too did workers continually struggle to produce "spatial fixes" more aligned to their own interests, needs, and desires.[3]

"Labor geography" thus seeks to pay proper analytical attention to workers' *determined* struggles to make the landscapes within which they live and work. The project of labor geography is to show how "working-class people have a vested interest in trying to ensure that the geography of capitalism is produced in certain ways and not in others, and [how] they play active parts in seeking to bring this about" and thus "how not just capital but also labor (broadly defined) shaped, through its actions the geography of capitalism." If, as Williams argued, community became a reality at the moment of its immersion in capitalist social relations, then that fact must be given its full due: this form of community became one of the determinations of capitalism's geography. For Herod, labor geography is a project to develop "a more serious consideration of how [workers] *actively produce economic spaces and scales* in particular ways (both directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously) as they implement in the landscape their own spatial fixes in the process of ensuring their own self-reproduction." Moreover, "focusing upon workers' efforts to build their own spatial fixes that are appropriate to their concerns at different times and in different places not only allows us to see labor as capable of acting proactively but also brings with it an appreciation of how the spatial context within which workers find themselves can lead them to develop vastly different solutions to particular problems." The impulse to a labor geography—ensuring workers' agency is right at the heart of any analysis of the ongoing historical geography of capitalism—is as important as it is laudable. It is both a political and an ontological move that places workers, their actions, their needs, their lives—that is, their struggles—at the heart of analysis.[4]

But it is also a self-limiting move. People may make their own histories and geographies—the material conditions of their very lives—but they *do so under conditions not of their own choosing*. They confront a world as given, and they often face foes with access to vastly larger reservoirs of power. Labor geography forgets at its peril a warning Harvey long ago made in his manifesto for what he called a "people's geography." Such a people's geography (and by extension labor geography) must not be "based on pious universalisms, ideals, and good intents, but [must be] a more mundane enterprise that reflects earthly interests and claims, that confronts ideologies and prejudice as they really are, that faithfully mirrors the complex weave of competition, struggle, and cooperation

within the shifting social and physical landscapes of the twentieth century. The world must be depicted, analyzed, and understood not as we would like it to be but as it really is, the material manifestation of human hopes and fears mediated by powerful and conflicting processes of social reproduction." What might the components of such a *determined* labor geography be? What do we analyze in order to depict that geography "as it really is"?[5]

Obviously, the existing, built landscape is one component of labor's geography (a component, which as we have seen, is not simply determined locally, but which internalizes a dialectic of scale). Braceros were, after all, imported into a landscape over which they had precious little power, even as it was their labor power that reproduced so many aspects of it. A second component can broadly be defined as the social relations of production and reproduction. This is not as abstract as it sounds: attention must be paid to the very specific practices through which labor power is deployed, through which it is reproduced, and over which its possessors (both the worker who embodies it and the capitalist who buys it) ceaselessly struggle to retain control. A third component, as we will see before long, are the specifics of *labor process*: precisely *how* labor power is deployed. A close focus on these components allows for insight into the conditions of possibility (which are not entirely of their own choosing) not only for labor's (determined) geography but for labor (determining) geography.

Landscapes are produced. They are physically made. They are made by people under specific and struggled-over historical and social conditions. That is, as we seek to see how workers create economic spaces and landscapes we must also closely examine those spaces and landscapes that they have *not* made, at least in any basic sense, but in which they find themselves and must live—those landscapes that are, through struggles and the exercise of power, produced *by* but not *for* them, those landscapes that might, whatever labor's determination, make Williams's "new kind of community" all but impossible. Workers make their own landscapes, yes, but the degree to which they have any control over the conditions of their production is an empirical question. It is a question that can only be answered by a close analytical focus on *power*—who has it, what it looks and feels like, and how it is deployed.

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CHAPTER SIX

Imperial Farming, Imperialist Landscapes

The 1951 Mexican labor recruiting program is, in fact, what the preceding programs have been—a huge subsidy in public funds, privat[e] charity and personal grief paid annually to the corporation farmers of the United States who have up to now been its main beneficiaries.

Ernesto Galarza, "Report on Trip to Contracting Center for Mexican Contract Nationals at Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico," April 22, 1951

In the citrus, we have need for men steadily. When the program was starting up five years ago or so, we used to give six-month contracts. The longest that was allowed. We thought, "What the heck? We can use 'em that long and longer." But we soon found out better. We found out that in every crew there are bound to be two or three jokers. Maybe they haven't got what it takes upstairs. They don't give 'em any I.Q. tests, you know. Maybe they're a little too fond of the bottle. Maybe they're labor agitators. Maybe they don't give a damn. . . . Well, with a six-month contract, you're stuck with the jokers, unless you can prove that they haven't lived up to their end of the contract. And this gets into so much red tape you wouldn't believe it. We would usually end up shelling out good money to feed these two or three guys in each crew who were just sitting around on their duffs. It didn't take us long to get smart. Now we give them nothing but six-week contracts. That way, we aren't out so much when a guy turns out to be no good. Suppose a guy turns out to be a crackerjack worker. Well, when his contract comes to expire, we renew it. But the extension is for another six weeks only. You never know what might get into a guy who seemed to be a crackerjack worker. We've got a lot of men in camp right now who have been here eighteen months straight. They've all made it the hard way—by one six-week extension after another.

Unnamed citrus grower, July 1957

THE GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley submitted its 405-page report to Governor Warren on March 15, 1951. Bowing to strenuous grower opposition, the report lacked recommendations in key areas, especially minimum wages and inclusion of farm workers in the National Labor Relations Act, two reforms that perhaps would have had the most effect on the stability of farm labor and might have done the most to reestablish its reproduction on a plane approaching one that was healthy for the workers. And it made no direct recommendation on the advisability (or not) of a contract labor importation program, confining its recommendations in this area to a call for strengthened border enforcement to keep illegal entrants out. Nonetheless, it provided nearly fifty eminently practical, unanimously agreed-upon recommendations, which if implemented would significantly alter the agricultural landscape of California (the research of the committee focused on the San Joaquin; its recommendations were largely geared toward statewide action).*

Some of the recommendations had a sense of déjà vu about them. The committee recommended, for example, the "Establishment of Public Camp Sites for Agricultural Workers"—this in the immediate wake of the federal government being forced to divest itself of its camps, and the controversies over grower control. With such camps, the committee advised, the state would begin to see the elimination of "ditch bank camps, shack towns, and jungles, which have become a menace to the health of the occupants and a potential hazard to the community at large." But it also recommended instituting a system of revocable permits for labor camps, auto courts, and other labor housing, a reorganization of the DoH so it could better meet its new workload, low-interest loans to farm workers so they could purchase their own housing as they settled out of the migratory stream, and a higher rate of amortization for labor camps to make their healthy operation more affordable.[1]

Some recommendations were long overdue, such as changes to the labor code to better regulate labor contractors and to revoke the licenses of those who violated the law, as well as to require them to post surety bonds of the higher

* Fisher called the recommendations "innocuous," and noted that central problems of the labor market in California—largely questions of wages and power—would, even if the proposals were implemented, "remain unsolved and virtually untouched." There is no doubt validity in Fisher's argument, but I think he also underestimated the degree to which wage relations and relations of power were in part a function of patterns of mobility, labor camp and other housing conditions, and other aspects of the agricultural system that the report did directly address and with which, he admitted, they were certainly entwined. Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 145–46.

of one thousand dollars or a sum equal to their highest weekly payroll, to pay their workers weekly, and to keep auditable records. It also recommended enforcement staff be increased, safeguards in contractor-supplied transportation be implemented, and contractors be required to carry their licenses on their person so unlicensed contractors could be more easily weeded out.[2]

Some of the recommendations directly addressed the health of farm workers, the proximate reason for the investigation in the first place. The committee recommended the implementation of a system of decentralized health facilities and mobile clinics to improve access to vital health care for workers who often lived in housing or camps far away from urban centers. Most important in this area, it recommended the creation of a Governor's Committee charged with developing a universal, statewide health care system for all workers that would cover especially those who moved across county lines (as present public health services often did not).[3]

Some of the recommendations went beyond the health of the laborer as a mere working body and sought to support her or him as a *person*, recommending changes in child labor law; reform of both child and adult education systems to better accommodate migrancy, non-English speakers, and those who suffered from "the special handicaps confronting migratory children [and adults] in securing equitable education opportunities"; the expansion of the school lunch program; the creation of child care centers for farm working families; the building of recreational facilities to which farm working families would have easy access; and the promotion of community resources designed to enhance "mental hygiene and community integration."[4]

A few recommendations were banal, such as the distribution of pamphlets to incoming farm workers, containing "an expression of the workers' importance to the economy"—or maybe not banal, but insulting, given that no recommendations about wages, a truer expression of "workers' importance to the economy," were made. Yet other recommendations seemed handicapped from the start. While the recommendation for the establishment of a California Agricultural Labor Resources Board, with representatives from the major state departments, organized labor, the agricultural lobbies, and even "the general public at large," whose "entire activities would be devoted to seasonal farm worker problems" sounded attractive, it was designed with no teeth: it could study and recommend, but it could not act.[5]

One recommendation was surprising. Over numerous grower objections as to its practicability and desirability, sometimes expressed with great vehemence in the public hearings, the committee recommended unemployment insurance be extended to farm workers. Granted, the committee recommended that the

insurance be developed "on a national basis" (a bow to the growers who insisted that state-based insurance would only lead to California being flooded with indigents from around the country), but the more important part of the recommendation was this: that the committee "would also favor unemployment insurance for agricultural workers on a California basis if a feasible plan could be presented by a fact-finding commission appointed by the governor from appropriate agencies." What is surprising in this recommendation is that as the committee minced few words in dismissing growers' desire for a forced-savings plan (its "legality and constitutionality . . . is debatable"), it showed clearly that a forced-savings plan would amount to an estimated 13.5 percent tax on farm workers, while extension of unemployment insurance in California to these same workers would be only a 0.5 percent "additional tax on all covered employment." It also laid out clearly workable ways in which seasonal and migratory workers could be tracked, including a stamp-book plan that worked well in both Canada and the United Kingdom. Even with a stamp-book plan, however, the committee admitted "that unemployment insurance might tend to immobilize the labor force, inducing workers to remain in a given community, rather than moving to other areas where work might be available." Soft-pedaled as it was, in other words, this recommendation portended a revolutionary transformation of California's traditional farm labor market, and if implemented would require a concomitant remaking of the pattern of agriculture that defined the California landscape.*[6]

None of the recommendations, in the end, would change a thing.

Indeed, as soon as the report was submitted, the Warren administration seemed to lose interest in farm labor, at least if the records that survive are a fair indication: while the files from 1950 are filled with agricultural labor concerns and controversies, the ones from 1951 on stand fairly empty.† The sense of crisis that had spurred the formation of the Governor's Committee had passed, and the administration apparently did nothing to act on the recommendations until eight months later, when M. F. Small wrote to department and division heads

* As Fisher notes, despite all its equivocations, the Governor's Committee went much farther with this "vigorous, and in the perspective of past government reports, bold" recommendation than the President's commission (which was bolder in many other respects) dared. *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 142, 145.

† Nor does there seem to have been much press coverage of the committee's report. By the time it came out, Paul Prasow had moved on to the state labor conciliation service and Earl Coke had returned to the Agricultural Extension to promote the importance of weed-free fields for the Korean War effort.

to inform them that "during November" the governor was planning to reactivate the committee "for the purpose of reviewing progress to date in bringing into effect the recommendations of the Committee." Small reminded the DoH, for example, that the committee had recommended "a broader definition of 'camp' to permit enforcement whether or not the occupants are employed at the time of the inspection," changing the law to require a revocable use permit, the provision of low-interest loans to farm workers, and the regulation of substandard housing, among other changes. But such progress required legislative action—the changing of laws—not bureaucratic efforts within department, and the governor had not really promoted such action. While it is true that legislation was introduced to require licensing of camps, it was tabled in committee, apparently without any pressure from the governor's suite. Instead, though the administration commissioned a study of the administrative structure and efficacy of DoH, it seemed mostly content with running its experiments in importing Filipino labor from Hawaii, assisting with the "screening" of Mexican Nationals recruited into California, and assuring the labor demands of growers were met at a time of war-induced labor supply shrinkage (across the economy) with no appreciable change in wage rates or other direct costs to growers (in 1951, agricultural wages in California declined as a percentage of total agricultural production expenses to 22.2% from 24.4% the year before, despite the supposed tightening of labor supply). There is no record that the governor ever in fact reconvened the committee.[7]

"Flash Crop"

Nor did the NFLU push hard for action when the Governor's Committee's report was released. By the time the report was sent to the governor, the NFLU was concentrating its energies on organizing the Imperial Valley—the ground zero of displacement.

Like many other parts of the state, the Imperial was improved, and production practices proved, in significant part by nonwhite farmers, in this case "Hindu" (most were actually Sikh), Japanese, and, to a lesser extent, Filipino and Mexican small farmers, frequently operating as tenants. To be sure, the Imperial Valley had originally been settled, and early irrigation schemes developed, in the expectation that a white, small-farmer republic would be created hard on the Mexican border, and also to be sure, white growers, both large and small, were vital to the Valley's development. But as historian Benny Andrés details, immigrants from the Punjab were the ones who established the Impe-

rial as a cotton region and Japanese farmers, working on two- to three-year leases,* were critically important early vegetable growers in what was later sometimes referred to as "the most abundant vegetable garden in the world." Early melons and lettuce were particular specializations in the Valley, increasing in acreage as the early twentieth-century cotton boom waned in the face of competition from the southern San Joaquin.† Yet Alien Land Laws in 1913 and 1920 that barred Japanese from owning land or leasing it for farming, and a series of court cases that defined "Hindus" as ineligible for citizenship, even though they were "Caucasians," and which barred American-born citizens (of whatever race) from marrying aliens ineligible for citizenship, drove many Japanese, Japanese American, and "Hindu" farmers out of the Valley in the 1920s. The coup de grace for those Japanese farmers who hung on (and a number did, often using quite ingenious means to skirt the laws) was, of course, the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. The drive to eliminate the Asian farmers of the Imperial, however, "had the unintended effect of driving out small farmers, accelerating land consolidation, tenancy, and precipitated the rise of the grower-shipping houses and farm superintendents" as "more ground passed into the hands of absentee owners or agribusiness corporations."[8]

Even so, at least in terms of ownership, the farming landscape remained quite complex, even as it was dominated by these absentee owners and agribusiness.‡ In 1950, there were nearly 4,800 farms, operated by 3,000 separate growers. Of these growers, 481 belonged to the IVFA, which had been established to coordinate the procurement and distribution of Mexican Nationals in the Valley. These 481 farmers—16 percent of the farmers in the Imperial—controlled 90 percent of the acreage; the fifty largest growers in the IVFA (many of whom lived in Los Angeles, or were corporations based in other states) controlled 50

* The short leases were a function of soil exhaustion. Heavy irrigation and the high nutrient demands of truck crops quickly depleted desert soils, and after three years, the big farmers and farming corporations that owned the land usually shifted leases to alfalfa growers in an effort to replenish the soil. Andrés, "Power and Control," 127.

† Extensive crops, like alfalfa and barley, occupied the most acreage, of course, and dairying was long an important component of desert agribusiness, but it was melons, lettuce, other vegetables, and some fruits that both demanded the most labor and brought in the most income. Cotton ballooned to 126,081 acres in 1920, but by 1938 had declined to less than 7,000 acres. See Andrés, "Power and Control," table 3, 126, and appendix 5, 522.

‡ By 1934, 67 percent of the land in the Valley was held in absentia; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 156.

percent of the Valley's acreage.* Where farmers in the Valley once bore names like Singh and Sanbonmatu, they now bore such names as Security First Bank, General American Life Insurance, State Life Insurance, Times-Mirror, and Balfour-Guthrie—as well as Joseph Maggio ("The Carrot King"), Joseph DiGiorgio, Bud Antle, Frank O'Dwyer, Keith Mets, and B. A. Harrington, the final three of whom served as the public face of the IVFA.[9]

Together, Imperial Valley growers produced some 75 different crops that in 1950 had a market value of more than $105 million (about $1 billion in 2010 dollars). Having never been among the top-ten agricultural counties before then, Imperial County rocketed into the rankings at fifth place in 1950 (and rose to second in 1959). And what led this surge was the turn to specialty crops—melons, lettuce, peas, carrots, watermelons, and asparagus—that could be grown and shipped in what for most of the country was the depths of the winter off-season. The Imperial Valley was, in the words of one NFLU analysis, "preeminently the land of the 'flash crop'—the fast-maturing, speculative, mass production farming operation typical of corporation farming in California," and in which, to quote a promotional tract, "it has not been unusual for farmers to pay for their land from the proceeds of one year's profit from winter vegetables."[10]

The Imperial was also increasingly becoming the land of "flash labor"—highly unsettled, poorly paid workers, perhaps as ephemeral as the winter crops themselves. The NFLU estimated that in 1951 there were between five thousand and ten thousand resident farm workers, most of them ethnically Mexican, who made their home in the Valley (including a number living on the Mexican side of the border but with U.S. citizenship or papers allowing them to work in the United States). Many, but not all, followed the crops north as summer—the dormant season—arrived in the desert. Some five thousand undocumented workers—a number of them also daily crossers from Mexicali—were at work in the fields during the spring, and another five thousand braceros were under contract to the IVFA. And it looked like farmers in the Valley were about to get a lot more. California Department of Employment Chief James Bryant confidently predicted in March 1951 that as a new international agreement governing labor importation was finalized, California would receive 40,000 of the total 85,000 workers imported during the year (directly recruited and screened by employers) and that "most of these 40,000 will be used in Southern counties, particularly Imperial Valley."[11]

* By contrast, in 1933, 70 out of around 2,800 growers controlled one-quarter of the arable land. Andrés, "Power and Control," 156.

As Bryant was making his prediction (and while Congress was busy debating bills that would restore the bracero program to a statutory basis),* the NFLU was formulating a strategy for organizing workers and winning demands in the Imperial. There, union strategists had to confront directly the problem of a labor force that was not only divided between migrants and a "home guard," not only divided between domestics and Nationals, and not only divided between these two and undocumented workers, but one that was essentially transnational in scope. The NFLU thus sought to "develop a close relationship with the farm workers of Mexicali, many of whom work regularly on farms just north of the border. These Mexicali workers react to the pressure of illegal and contract labor in the same way as local resident workers of the Imperial Valley," while also establishing strong locals within the Imperial Valley itself. The NFLU therefore developed an agreement with the Mexicali Union of Farm Workers (affiliated with the Confederatión de Trajabadores de México), which counted three or four hundred members. The NFLU also sought, for the first time, to work directly with braceros, developing an agreement with the Alianza de Braceros de México (a member of the Confederación Proletaria Nacional). Both agreements sought to reinforce the NFLU's demands for the Imperial: "(1) No

* Bryant's predictions came in the wake of what was in fact a serious reconsideration of the program, especially by the Mexican government. Pushed by powerful farm organizations—Galarza says that the CVEA, the very organization that had called for the Governor's Committee to examine the conditions that had led to the infant deaths in late 1949, was one of those doing the pushing—the U.S. officials met their Mexican counterparts for a week beginning January 26 to hammer out a continuation of the bilateral international agreement. Dissatisfied with many aspects of the program as it had operated since 1948, Mexican negotiators confronted the Americans with a series of demands: contracts would once again have to be guaranteed by the U.S. government; all contracting would have to be done in the interior of Mexico; U.S. legislation would have to be enacted to penalize employers of undocumented labor; and there would have to be an end to the practice of "regularizing" undocumented workers in the United States. U.S. negotiators eventually agreed to reestablish the program on a government-government basis, and two members of the Senate and House agricultural committees who were in attendance at the negotiations returned to Washington to do that by promoting a joint bill that would place the program on statutory footing. They arrived home about the same time both the Governor's Committee issued its report for stepped-up border enforcement, and the President's Commission on Migratory Labor issued a report adding a recommendation that employers be penalized for employing undocumented workers and calling for any importation of foreign labor to "be under the terms of intergovernmental agreements." Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 72; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 429–39, 443–44; Calavita, *Inside the State*, 42–43; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 71; Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 49; President's Commission on Migratory Labor, *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 66, 88.

importation of contract labor unless the need is determined by public hearing with participation of the union; (2) importation only on the bases of a wage scale negotiated by the employers with the Union; (3) equal pay and conditions for all contract aliens brought in . . . ; (4) affiliation of all contract aliens with the Union through their home organizations with transfer of membership and joint participation in financing organizational expenses; (5) prohibition of employment of illegals." This last point posed the starkest problem for the union, not only in the Valley, but everywhere: how to demonize the use of illegal labor without demonizing the undocumented workers, who might, in the end, have to become allies if strikes were going to have any effect.[12]

This was no easy feat, and the union often did not succeed. Demonization of illegal entrants to the United States was rife and crossed all lines. Just as Mexican Americans and Southwestern Hispanics could be among the most vociferous in their opposition to the bracero program, so too could they also often be the sharpest opponents of "wetbacks." Even as the NFLU was plotting strategy in the Imperial, George I. Sánchez, the long-serving chair of the Department of History and Philosophy of Education at the University of Texas, told the *New York Times* that the "influx of a million or more 'wetbacks' a year transforms the Spanish-speaking people of the Southwest from an ethnic group which might be assimilated with reasonable facility into what I call a 'culturally indigestible' peninsula of Mexico. The 'wetback' migration tends to nullify a process of social integration that goes back 300 or 350 years, and I would say at the present time has set the whole assimilation project back at least twenty or thirty years." To illustrate Sánchez's point, the *Times* published a photograph of "A Typical 'Wetback' Village Near U.S. Border," showing houses "made of cardboard, sticks, and scrap iron . . . that house thousands of the illegal Mexican Migrants." It is a striking picture, made even more so by one thing: the housing in the picture, says the *Times*, is in Mexicali, which is to say, it did not necessarily house "illegal Mexican Migrants." Rather, it housed, among many others, workers with U.S. citizenship but who could not afford or chose not to live on the U.S. side, and workers with permits that allowed them to cross daily, and legally, to work in the California fields.[13]

Some of those with U.S. citizenship or crossing papers chose not to live on the U.S. side because, though the cost of living was much more, the conditions in which they would have to live were hardly dissimilar. Available housing for local workers was typically only to be found in the shacktowns, "which are so common in California" (as Galarza put it, though the point was well confirmed by the studies of the Governor's Committee and frequent reports by the DoH). In the Imperial in particular, there was a long history of appalling

housing conditions. By World War II, most Valley towns had growing barrios, often consisting, as with Brawley's, of "hovels; few have lawns; there are few or no sanitary conveniences; and few homes have running water," as a 1935 study put it. According to the NFLU, domestic workers lived "in the slum areas of Brawley, El Centro and Calexico, with smaller shacktowns in Imperial, Holtville, Calipatria, Niland and Seeley. The streets are unpaved, street lighting is at a minimum. Community services—hospitals, fire stations—are usually found on the better side of the railroad tracks. Parks, swimming pools and other facilities which would make the torrid summer months more bearable for the farm labor population do not exist." There was an impermanence, not only about the housing in the shacktowns, but especially in the rural parts of the county, where the tenancy system meant that "tenants transported shacks every three years" to new fields, and much housing for farm workers existed only because "some employers let workers build huts made of discarded wood, cardboard, tin siding, and brush"—creating exactly the kind of landscape seen in the Mexicali neighborhood the *New York Times* attributed to "wetbackism" but which was in fact a function of the economic structure—and the wage scales—of the Valley.[14]

Braceros and other seasonal or migratory labor (though not always undocumented workers) lived in labor camps, and conditions were never good. In 1926, DIH inspector Fred Rugg did not find a single camp in the Valley that conformed to the Labor Camp Act, and, as we saw in chapter 2, when his boss told him to begin arresting camp operators he found no sympathy among the judges of the Valley. Eight years later, little had changed. Camp inspectors discovered little more than "filth, squalor, an entire absence of sanitation, and a crowding of human beings into totally inadequate tents or crude structures built of boards, weeds, and anything that was found at hand to give a pitiful semblance of a home at its worst." Against vehement grower opposition, the FSA constructed a permanent labor camp near Brawley and a mobile camp in Calipatria, which for a short time held out the hope of fairly decent housing at least for (mostly) white workers in the Valley. Like the other camps in the state, the Brawley camp was handed over to growers after World War II—in this instance to the IVFA, which used it to house contracted Mexican Nationals.[15] Conditions in other growers' camps were at best minimal; growers even sometimes objected to providing Mexican workers with blankets, asserting either that they did not need them or that if they had to provide all their workers with more than one blanket, they could not possibly be profitable.*

* Galarza describes one bracero camp in June 1951: "some 80 Nationals were found by Union members living in the open, in the shelter of haystacks, on metal cots covered with hay in

Whatever the shortcomings of the labor camps, they usually provided housing that was at least marginally better than that which was available to undocumented workers, which was nothing. Referring to grower attitudes in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, a University of Texas report got cause and effect backward when it averred that "the living standards which Mexican nationals [meaning undocumented workers] are willing to tolerate, and the fact that so many of them are only temporary residents, have made it unnecessary for valley farmers to provide housing, sanitary facilities and other nonwage perquisites adequate to retain a permanent resident farm population." The report's authors were nonetheless stating what many growers, not only in the Rio Grande, but all along the border, took as common sense. In the Imperial, according to Galarza, undocumented workers made up one-third of the workforce.

> Hundreds of them lived in scrubby hideouts along the banks of the main canals and in the gullied desert around Heber, Holtville, and Westmoreland. They dug caves behind screens of brush, cooked over open pits, spread their clothes to dry on stones, left their retreats before sunup to be picked up by contractors who took them to the fields and returned them at night by light of the moon to rest by tiny campfires. They fashioned straw huts shaped like pup tents, tying the stalks with Twist-ems purloined from their employers and from which it was possible to tell for whom they worked. An abandoned farmhouse, standing desolate in mid-desert and surrounded by dusty poplars or cottonwood trees, on close inspection showed all the signs of occupancy by illegals. Beneath loose floor planks there were dugouts, under an innocent pile of trash cooking utensils were kept wrapped in old newspapers, in back of the house an escape route. Water for these encampments was taken from irrigation ditches, fuel gathered from isolated woodlots.
>
> This was the lifestyle of thousands of Imperial Valley illegals whose minimal requirements fixed their level of living.*

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lieu of mattresses. Less than half of these men had even one blanket." "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 5; see also notes, "1 Ntl—Corona Camp—Brawley," December 3, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 7. The provision of blankets to Mexican Nationals arose as a point of controversy numerous times as the bracero program wore on, as will be seen.

* Galarza names the names on the twistems, "Maggio" (the "Carrot King") and "Mets-O'Dwyer" (perhaps the most powerful grower in the Imperial), in Ernesto to Mitch, May 8, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5. Forty and fifty years later, many California workers were still living in caves dug out of hillsides, in converted barns and chicken sheds, or in makeshift camps with shelters made of grass, cardboard, plastic tarps, and the occasional plywood sheet. See, for example, Wells, *Strawberry Fields*, 211–14; Langerweische, "Invisible Men."

Faced with such conditions, local workers had only two choices, according to the University of Texas's George Sánchez: "work for what the 'wetback' works for and live as he lives, or leave the area. Many accept the former alternative. Those who can, choose the second and become displaced persons." "Flash labor" was in this way entrenched, and the pattern of displacement the NFLU sought to highlight at the San Joaquin Valley hearings was advanced.[16]

The combined effects of undocumented immigration and bracero importations were at the root of this displacement of the *locales*, a displacement that, in fact, disproportionately affected women workers, who were often the first to see their jobs eliminated or more fully casualized. "The season earnings of these women," Hasiwar reported to Governor Warren, "are an important part of the income of agricultural families. These earnings have been drastically cut both by virtue of shorter work periods and the reduction of wage scales." Other marginal workers seemed just to disappear: "The skid rows of Brawley and El Centro are empty," Galarza noted at the peak of the 1951 harvest. The Imperial Valley, it seemed, "show[ed] the extreme form of the effects of displacement, blacklisting, wage-cutting and other effects of the wholesale importation of Mexican labor," both officially contracted and not. The NFLU thus decided to make the Imperial Valley the site of its strongest stand and union strategy centered on this combined effect, hoping to take advantage of the fact that under the circumstances, "growers are confused as hell as to whether to go wet or contract completely. A couple of them have veered from one to [the] other within the last 48 hours." Labor fluidity was yielding to labor anarchy, or so it seemed, and the NFLU hoped that in the midst of this confusion it could make its stand on behalf of the Valley's remaining domestic workers. Doing so was crucial because "it is in the Imperial that not only the local or State but also the international issues involved come to a head. It is clear to the organizers on the spot that if the Associated Farmers are allowed to freeze this situation the local labor population will move north and the valley will become, within a year, or two, a trade-union sahara [sic]. If this happens, the subsequent campaign in the north will be in the nature of a holding operation against a tide of alien and illegal labor flowing northward through Imperial."[17]

In the struggle to organize workers in the Imperial Valley, the NFLU expected to have to face down powerful forces. "Against the Union are the Associated Farmers; the local political machines which they dominate; the industrial trusts of Los Angeles and San Francisco; the State Department of Employment; and certain influential officials of the Federal departments of Labor, Agriculture and State." Against these forces "no local dispute . . . can any longer be localized." Nonetheless, the union had, often, to work *with* those powerful forces—at least

the government ones—as often as they had to work against them. The first NFLU move was therefore to begin bringing pressure on growers who used illegal workers, bringing their names to the attention of the secretary of labor.[18]

In particular, the NFLU focused its sights on the high-profile firm of O'Dwyer and Mets, a large grower of vegetables.* Keith Mets was president of the IVFA and a powerful spokesman for agribusiness interests. Frank O'Dwyer was the brother of the former New York City mayor and current ambassador to Mexico, William O'Dwyer.† In early February 1951, the NFLU alerted the Department of Labor that O'Dwyer and Mets was working a "mixed crew" of contract braceros and undocumented workers, a violation of Section 23 of the international agreement, which held that "permission to contract workers under this agreement shall not be granted to those employers who continue to use Mexican workers who are illegally in the United States." It further provided that if mixed crews were found on a farm, then "the employment of workers under this agreement shall be cancelled." On February 5, 1951, immigration officers found three hundred undocumented workers on the O'Dwyer and Mets ranch, and the USDL promised a full investigation, though it suggested that any such investigation would be "complicated by the fact [O'Dwyer and Mets] belonged to the Imperial Valley [Farmers] Association." The *New York Times* reported that Labor held that this fact "could possibly result in withdrawal of Mexican laborers from other association members."[19]

In their defense, Mets claimed he had no choice but to hire illegal workers to supplement his eighty braceros because of the "shortage of farm labor" in the area. O'Dwyer added that the three hundred undocumented workers "had been working . . . pending government approval of their contracts." That is to say,

* Though it focused especially on O'Dwyer and Mets, this firm was only one of eleven farm corporations the union claimed admitted to using mixed crews. It had a list of seventeen other employers it claimed refused work to union members while continuing to employ braceros. Notes, n.d. [March 1951], Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 8.

† At the time of the events being detailed here, several close associates of William O'Dwyer were under investigation by the Senate Committee on Crime chaired by Estes Kefauver. W. O'Dwyer, himself under investigation for receiving illegal contributions from the fire and police unions, was eventually recalled to New York City to testify in what became one of the great media firestorms of the era. See, for example, Warren Moscow, "O'Dwyer Friends Heard by Senators in Crime Inquiry," *New York Times*, February 15, 1951, 1; James Haggerty, "Ex-Mayor Pressed," *New York Times*, March 20, 1951, 1; Jack Gould, "Millions Glued to TV for Hearing: Home Chores Wait, Shopping Sags," *New York Times*, March 20, 1951, 1; "'No O'Dwyer Resignation': Truman Aides are Queried on Status of Ambassador," *New York Times*, March 22, 1951, 22; William Carney, "O'Dwyer Answers Kefauver Charges," *New York Times*, April 25, 1951, 24.

he fully expected, absent union pressure, these "wets" would be "dried out" in the now standard practice of recontracting illegal workers and braceros. "But," according to Mets, "on Feb. 5, immigration authorities visited the ranch and took away the extra 300 laborers as 'wetbacks' because they had no contract." As the USDL investigated, it let the legally contracted braceros continue working despite clear injunctions against this in the international agreement. On February 27, "an informal hearing"—or what a representative of the BES called "informal conversations"—was held in El Centro among representatives of the BES, the California Department of Employment, and Keith Mets representing both the IVFA and O'Dwyer and Mets. Two weeks later, Glenn Brockway, the regional director of the BES, informed Galarza and Hasiwar that his agency "has recently discussed the whole subject with the principal parties concerned"—the February 27 meeting—but no action had yet been taken because "the transcript of the statements made at this meeting has just reached us, and we are reviewing it and the other materials bearing on this subject."[20]

Galarza's response was sharp. He noted the union's demand was not for an "investigation" or a "meeting," but rather that the terms of the international agreement be enforced; as part of this enforcement, according to Galarza, the agreement required that a *public* hearing be held. Absent that, the record already showed Keith Mets had admitted to "knowingly" hiring undocumented workers, both in his own firm and through the IVFA. Nonetheless, Galarza complained, the BES continued to permit O'Dwyer and Mets to use braceros for the six weeks since the illegal workers were removed. Brockway rejoined by saying the "preliminary" investigation, as he now called the February 27 meeting, was required under the terms of the international agreement (Article 22), that it had been requested by the Mexican consul in Calexico, and that he was now reviewing all the pertinent information and was about to release a report to which the CFL would have access.* Brockway's goal seemed to be to craft recommendations to farmers "to minimize future violations of the law," but not to prosecute current ones. In the meantime, Imperial Valley farmers received permission to renew the contracts of some 4,800 contract Nationals through the end of May—essentially the end of the season—even as the NFLU was claiming that some 60 percent of the Valley's domestic workers were in the process of being displaced north.[21]

On May 1, Brockway announced his recommendations for assuring minimal

* It appears the results of the "preliminary investigation" were in fact never made public; see Gladwin Hill, "Penalty for Hiring 'Wetbacks' Hailed: Employers and Employes [sic] Give Qualified Backing—Policy Would Revoke Contracts," *New York Times*, May 6, 1951, 41.

violation of the law in the future: "a 'get tough' policy toward farmers of the Far West who employ Mexican 'wetback' labor." He sent a letter to Mets, as president of the IVFA, warning him that "unless vigorous action is taken at once to assure that members of the association have eliminated employment of illegal workers . . . appropriate action" would be taken. This action would be that "all contract workers would be withdrawn as well as all illegals, and the association and its members would be denied the right to contract legal Mexican workers in the future." According to the *Times*, all growers associations who employed braceros received similar letters. In other words, *past* violation of the law was not to be punished, but future violations presumably would be. Indeed, the INS was gearing up for a concerted drive against employers hiring undocumented workers in the Imperial. However, in accordance with new BES policy, growers were "formally advised in advance of the drive." With such advance notice, O'Dwyer and Mets was this time "found to be free of wetbacks," though other members of the IVFA were not. Galarza attributed the advance warning and thus O'Dwyer and Mets's escape this time around to a deal struck within the Truman administration to protect the already fragile legitimacy of Frank O'Dwyer's brother, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico William O'Dwyer, who was under investigation for ties to organized crime. But he expressed himself happy with the ensnaring of Joe Maggio, "the carrot king of the valley," and a well-recognized grower because of his advertizing in the Los Angeles area. In response to losing his braceros (according to Galarza), Maggio "has temporarily gone all out for wets," which Galarza predicted, would help bring the Mexicali unions into the strike the union was now planning for the Valley.[22]

The raids on Imperial Valley farmers—and the promise of further raids should there be a strike—emboldened the union.* Galarza reported that the union had also secured "what looks like a commitment from [Labor Secretary] Tobin to move the contract Mexicans out of the Valley as soon as we go out on strike." With three active locals organized, and following the failure of the NFLU to induce growers, and the IVFA in particular, to meet with either state or federal conciliators, the NFLU called a strike for 3:00 a.m. (shapeup time) on May 24 for the melon, sugar beet, and spring vegetable harvests. Some six thousand farm workers put down their tools. In addition to picketing fields, strikers set up a picket line on the border to discourage daily crossers; they also tried to

* On May 17, the NFLU's Mitchell reported to Hasiwar that he had learned from Representative Jack Shelley "that telegraphic orders had gone out to Los Angeles, San Diego and Tucson district office to send all available border patrolmen into Imperial County, and that within 24-hours, 35 or 40 men would be in to handle the wetback raids." Mitchell to Hasiwar, May 17, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5.

work closely with immigration officers to identify "wetbacks" on contractor trucks heading for the fields. The union claimed that fewer than 10 percent of local workers reported to the fields, and that growers resorted to nighttime recruiting and harvesting "by electric lights" to avoid the picketers. While the AFL in Washington quickly announced it supported the strike and called on the INS to remove illegal workers and Secretary Tobin to remove braceros in the Valley, the Teamsters once again proved disruptive. Despite official sanctioning of the strike by the AFL and the Imperial Valley Central Labor Council, Teamster officials ordered their drivers to not honor the picket lines, with the Teamsters' legislative representative in Sacramento calling the strike a "wildcat" and "outlaw" action.* Based, apparently, on the Teamsters' position, CIO packinghouse workers readily crossed picket lines. Galarza claimed that while the Teamsters and CIO positions "had not direct effect" on the prosecution of the strike, they did "serve the important purpose of the Associated Farmers of providing publicity material which was hurled [at] the farmworkers practically every day while the strike lasted."[23]

It also had the important effect of sowing confusion in the minds of USDL and Mexican Consular officials as to whether a strike was really in effect, and whether therefore, Mexican Nationals had to be withdrawn from the fields. As early as May 25, the superintendent of the California Conciliation Service had wired the BES to say there was a "substantial work stoppage" in the Imperial, and it looked like both the BES and the Mexican government at first were ready to act quickly to remove undocumented workers (many of whom, in a novel program, were being flown to the interior of Mexico rather than just deposited over the border) as well as braceros who had been in the United States longer than a year (many of whom had been recontracted numerous times in contravention of the rules of the program).† The union hoped it would likewise quickly move against the rest of the braceros, since the international agreement held that when there was "a labor dispute" the USES would remove all contract Nationals and "make every effort to transfer [them] to other agricultural

* Galarza later attributed the Teamsters' moves to a set of high-level negotiations whereby the Associated Farmers would withdraw their support of "hot cargo" bills that their allies had introduced into both houses of the California legislature in exchange for the Teamsters disavowing the Imperial Valley strike, in a move many expected would undermine the NFLU's support among farm workers. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 161–63.

† The NFLU claimed that if braceros remained in the United States after their contracts expired, they were in violation of the National Security Act, which required registration of aliens. "Current Violation of the International Agreement by the Imperial Valley Farmers Association as of This Date May 31, 1951," Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 8.

employment." More important, a Joint Interpretation made by Mexican and American officials required that "in borderline cases where there is difficulty in determining whether the labor dispute is 'affecting the operations' the workers should be removed in order to avoid subjecting Mexican workers to possible incidents." Yet whatever the letter—or the spirit—of these agreements, the Department of Labor, reacting to the confusion sowed by the Teamsters, waited until June 8, two weeks into the strike, to announce even minimal enforcement of the international agreement. Indeed, the Mexican government asserted in late May that consultation with the U.S. Department of State had shown that the USDL had not recognized a strike and therefore braceros could not be removed.* On May 31, perhaps as many as one thousand braceros with expired contracts remained in the Valley awaiting recontracting—and technically illegal.[24]

Seeking to make the best of an untenable situation, the NFLU drew on its contacts with the Alianza de Braceros, as well as a provision in the international agreement allowing braceros to elect their own representatives, to get forty contract Nationals to sign union authorization cards. But the USDL refused to recognize the NFLU as their legitimate representative on the grounds that "there is no provision in the international agreement for any non-governmental agency or group to intervene in cases of complaints filed against employers by Mexican nationals." Instead, Labor Secretary Tobin sent investigative teams into the Imperial to assess conditions. Finally, on June 8, he announced that braceros would be removed, but—despite assurances to H. L. Mitchell in Washington that he was authorizing the "removal of contract workers from farms in the area in which said dispute is of such a nature as to result in workers leaving their jobs to go on strike"—only from farms in which it could be proved that domestic workers originally walked off their jobs on May 24. Given the casual nature of the harvest labor market for domestic workers, the determination of which farms were actually employing both bracero and domestic workers who struck on May 24 required, the USDL decided, an intensive inspection of payroll and other records. Given that many growers and contractors kept shoddy payroll records at best (and sometimes none at all), and given that many domestic workers left the area as the strike was called to seek work in other locales, the union had little faith in this process of "ranch to ranch" strike certification. In addition to the fact that the union had called the strike against the IVFA, which set the wages for the area and which served as the clearinghouse for the labor

* When the union requested copies of the diplomatic notes upon which the Mexican government's assessment was made, William O'Dwyer claimed that he had lost them when his office was being moved. "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers, May–June 1951," 26; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 168.

deployed to all the large farmers, the NFLU rightly contended that, according to the contracts, braceros' official employer was not each farmer or corporation, but the IVFA, and that the place of employment was not the individual ranch, but the Imperial Valley. The "ranch to ranch" theory of strike certification, the NFLU feared, was not only one more delaying tactic among many that would allow the farmers of the IVFA to complete their harvest with very little disruption to their supply of braceros, but also a means whereby "the Department of Labor, under its own arbitrary interpretation of an international agreement, can create and condone conditions which destroy the economic power of American farm workers to defend themselves against powerful combinations of bosses."[25]

The union's fears proved well-founded. It took the USDL nearly two more weeks to order the actual removal of any braceros, and when it did, it did so only for 125 workers on 3 ranches, on each of which the harvest had already been completed for the season, and at which braceros were no longer employed. Two days earlier, on June 23, meanwhile, the USES had already certified 1,500 more braceros for the Valley, 500 of whom were immediately available.[26]

While all of this was simmering, the NFLU's offensive against "wetbacks" boiled over. Galarza later wrote:

> From the point of view of the union the wetbacks could not be abandoned totally to the growers and contractors, however difficult it might be to maintain communication with them. The exploitation and social exclusion of the illegals foreshadowed the model to which all workers, including domestics and braceros would be reduced. Manipulation of masses of wetbacks was the least defensible of the strategies of agri-business, measured by the institutional values of larger society, Christian, ethical, and democratic. To repulsive economic abuses, difficult as they were to deal with, there was added a contagious social exclusivism, already deeply rooted in the labor movement in California. The promised land of collective bargaining that trade unionism was striving for held the promise of more income for fewer workers, the effects of technology, integration, higher wages, and better fringe benefits for those who survived the attrition. To protect it the border would have to become an unbreachable line of containment behind which a diminishing number of American workers could rest secured.

In the Imperial Valley, this deeply rooted "exclusivism at the heart of mid-century California trade unionism," an exclusivism that demanded closed borders, directly confronted what was in fact a transnational economy and labor market, "with American capital moving south into the Mexican borderlands and impoverished labor northward into those of the United States," and the

union had no choice but to try to negotiate the contradictions this confrontation brought to the fore.[27]

And brought to the fore, those contradictions presented themselves to the union primarily as strategic problems to be faced. Whatever the "exploitation and social exclusion of the illegals" and whatever their conditions portended for other workers, what the NFLU faced as it began its strike were workers who were, or were being used as, strikebreakers. Perhaps they were strikebreakers with a different level of culpability than California and national Teamster officials, but they were still a force that had to be prevented from picking the struck ranches. In addition to creating alliances with unions in Mexico, picketing the border (more than a dozen union pickets were arrested for "obstructing traffic" in the border town of Calexico on May 30, with one NFLU organizer receiving a thirty-day sentence for the crime), and trying to pull undocumented workers off contractors' trucks, the union created a set of escalating tactics designed to expose the exploited and degraded conditions within which undocumented workers worked, to push them out of the Valley whenever possible, and, primarily, to prevent their use in the area-wide harvest. On the eve of the strike, the union informed both the county health officials and the DIR of the locations of ditch-bank camps housing "hundreds" of undocumented workers and requested inspection and abatement of conditions. The County Health Department claimed it had no jurisdiction and could not act; Paul Scharrenberg, the head of DIR, seems never to have responded.[28]

More direct collusion in growers' exploitation of undocumented workers was provided by deputy sheriffs who, as the *New York Times* reported, "were rounding up wetbacks" in the various ditch-bank settlements "and escorting them though picket lines." Union members responded with their own program of "citizens' arrests" of undocumented workers—picking them up wherever they found them and delivering them directly to the INS, an action that the NFLU claimed doubled the effectiveness of the Border Patrol in its new program of airlifting undocumented workers into Mexico's interior. Three union members engaged in this practice were soon themselves arrested on charges of kidnapping (a charge later dropped by the district attorney).* Finally, the NFLU began picketing the Mexican Consulate in Calexico itself in an attempt to force it to remove contract Nationals from the area.[29]

* In 1952, citizens' arrests (as well as arrests by any but INS officers) of illegal migrants was specifically prohibited with the passage of the Walter-McCarran Immigration Act (PL 414, Article 274(a)).

Despite the efforts of local sheriffs and the IVFA, and despite the lack of effort on the part of the USDL and its representatives in determining whether there was a strike, whom it was against, and therefore when and where braceros should be withdrawn, the union seemed to be making some headway in the strike. The *New York Times*, for example, reported that even before Secretary Tobin had decided to withdraw the few braceros that he did, produce shipments from the Imperial Valley had dropped 66 percent over the previous year; it attributed much of the decline to the unrest in the Valley. The IVFA claimed this was due not to the strike but to "poor weather conditions, insects, and an acreage reduction." Whichever explanation was the more accurate, the continuing ease with which undocumented workers crossed the border, the desultory way in which the USDL responded to demands that braceros be removed from the Valley, and the certification of new braceros for the area even as the strike continued (and the harvest wound down) led H. L. Mitchell to "suspend" the strike on June 25, 1951, until the harvest resumed the following winter.[30]

PL 78

If the NFLU's spring campaign in the Imperial came, at best, to an indeterminate conclusion, the same cannot be said for the simultaneous campaign in Washington by growers seeking to make permanent their access to supremely controllable Mexican National contract labor. With Mexican government complaints about abuses to the 1949 international agreement mounting, pressure was building in the United States to reestablish the program on firmer statutory footing. While many growers were loath to lose their ability to directly recruit and contract workers in Mexico, they were also fearful of Mexico following through on its frequent threats to end the program altogether. Senator Allan Ellender (D-La.) and Representative William R. Poage (D-Waco, Tex.), who as members of their respective legislative agricultural committees,* had been

* Ellender was chair of the Senate committee. All of the standard histories of the bracero program (except Craig, *Bracero Program*) assert that Poage was chair of the House Agricultural Committee; they are wrong. According to numerous biographies and obituaries, he did not assume that position until 1967. At the time under consideration here, Poage was chair of a special subcommittee on farm labor within the House Agricultural Committee. See, for example, "Mexican Labor Use Urged for Defense: Poage Says Farms Need Help—Labor Department Makes Plea for Puerto Ricans," *New York Times*, March 9, 1951, 15. According to Calavita, *Inside the State*, 45, when Senator Eugene McCarthy objected to the State Department over its invitation to Ellender and Poage, the department "apologized for the exclusive invitations and promised in the future" that invitations would be made through the Speaker of the House and the vice president (as president of the Senate). In the event, State simply stopped including legislators on its negotiating trips.

invited to participate in early 1951 negotiations in Mexico City, introduced bills (S Res 984 and HS 3048) that would amend the Agricultural Act of 1949 and return the Mexican labor program to a statutory basis. As a partial sop to Mexico, the bills did not allow direct recruiting by growers, and made the federal government the official guarantor of the wage and transportation provisions of the work contracts, but they also contained provisions expanding the definition of agricultural work to include nearly all food processing (canning and packing) as well as cotton ginning and horticultural work.*[31]

On amendments from the floor, the Senate added provisions to its version of the bill that made it illegal to knowingly hire workers illegally in the United States (providing for fines of up to two thousand dollars and jail terms of up to a year for those found guilty) and that authorized the revocation of contract labor from farms that employed undocumented workers; but it rejected an amendment, based on recommendations of the President's Commission, that would have made enforcement possible by allowing INS officers to enter a place of work—a field or a packing shed—without a warrant to search for undocumented workers. For its part, the House refused any amendments to the Poage bill. In conference, House negotiators agreed to the Senate provisions outlawing the "regularizing" of workers illegally in the United States and depriving growers who knowingly hired undocumented workers of the right to contract labor. But conferees eliminated the provision in the Senate bill that made it illegal to knowingly hire such workers, claiming it was not, as Senator Ellender put it, "germane" to the operation of the Mexican labor importation program.† Finally, responding to a request from Mexico, the conference committee extended the term of the law by a year to December 31, 1953. The law passed easily in both chambers on June 30, 1951, and President Truman signed it into law—as PL 78—on July 12, and in doing so formally overturned a provision of U.S. immigration law that since 1885 had outlawed the importation of foreign contract labor.[32]

Truman apparently signed the law with some reluctance (and over the objections particularly of the USDL). While he seemed not to have been worried about the upending of immigration law (which seems to have attracted very

* Scruggs reports "that most of the federal agencies concerned approved the Ellender-Poage bill as far as it went but did not believe that it met sufficiently the Mexican governments [sic] demands or that it provided adequately for the welfare of American farm workers." *Braceros*, 445.

† Galarza argued that such a statement showed that Ellender and Poage were "welching on the Mex govt on this point" because they had "promised the Mexican government publicly that a wet bill would be passed as a condition of the continuation of the agreement." Ernesto to Mitch, May 8, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5.

little debate in Congress), he was worried that the bill he received represented "very little progress, which hardly touches on our basic farm labor problems." It did nothing to address what he saw as the pressing problem of illegal immigration which, he averred, "hurt" the undocumented immigrants "first of all" because "under threat of deportation" they "are unable . . . to protest" appalling conditions "or to protect themselves." Illegal immigration also "displaced thousands of our own citizens, particularly those of Latin descent," or forced them "to work under substandard conditions." And because an illegal labor supply was unsteady and forced displacement, growers "face a crisis in their labor supply at every season. They are forced, year after year, to makeshift last minute measures to save their crops." The current bill, Truman argued, addressed only a small part of this problem by reestablishing the importation program on a firmer basis. But even here he had misgivings. He objected to the expanded definition of agriculture that allowed braceros to work in food processing: "I believe Congress should repeal this provision." But, while he talked expansively of providing resources for further study of the farm labor problem (study presumably geared toward enacting the recommendations of his own President's Commission on Migratory Labor), he made no mention of guaranteeing to domestic workers—those very workers he noted were displaced by undocumented workers—even the minimal wage, employment, and health and other guarantees formally provided to braceros by PL 78 and its accompanying international agreements.[33]

His reluctance to sign the bill, Truman told Congress, was only overcome by the assurance of "Congressional leaders that supplementary legislation and appropriations would receive prompt consideration at this session." But that rings hollow. After all, Congress had stripped from the bill provisions to make the hiring of undocumented workers illegal; it had not allowed into the bill a provision that Truman argued in his signing statement was crucial, a provision that would "clearly establish the authority of personnel of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to inspect places of employment, without a warrant, where they have reason to believe that illegal immigrants are working or quartered." And bills introduced into both chambers to provide domestic workers with the same guarantees afforded imported labor never made it out of committee. It seemed unrealistic to assume that further legislation along these lines would be forthcoming. And while a few years later, the federal government did begin a large-scale crackdown on illegal immigration (see chapter 8), as in California where all the work of the Governor's Committee added up to no legislative action, so too in Washington did the work of Truman's President's Commission—whose report "in breadth and coverage and clarity of presenta-

tion . . . has no equal among public documents bearing on the subject," in the words of one observer—never led to concerted legislative reform in agricultural labor relations.[34]

Immediately after Truman signed the Ellender-Poage Bill into law,* the U.S. government reopened negotiations with Mexico on a new international agreement (replacing a temporary agreement reached in February) and standard work contract to govern the program as it was now defined by PL 78, finalizing both in early August. Together PL 78, and the 1951 international agreement and standard contract, with some minor revisions, were to provide the blueprint for the program right up until its demise in 1964. The main provisions of PL 78 were that workers illegally in the United States could only be contracted as braceros if they had legally entered the country but their contracts had expired, or if they had been in the country for more than five years; a labor shortage had to be certified by the secretary of labor; the secretary also had to certify that importation would have no "adverse effect" on domestic workers; growers had to first attempt to recruit domestic workers before they would be certified for braceros; braceros would be paid the prevailing wage; and, as noted, employers who used undocumented workers would be ineligible to receive contract workers. The international agreement and work contract codified and elaborated the provisions of PL 78. Extending to forty-one articles, the international agreement was in essence the "constitution" of the program and detailed the range of rights and responsibilities of the various parties involved.[35]

Historian Otey Scruggs suggests the 1951 international agreement made only three significant changes to earlier agreements: (1) it restricted the conditions under which illegal entrants could be "regularized"; (2) it authorized the United States to guarantee wages and transportation for braceros (a stipulation of PL 78); and (3) it ratified a procedure for recruiting workers that had been decided on during negotiations in February. But Galarza suggests its importance was nonetheless great. First, it established a set of formal rights for both domestic and bracero workers, among them, that the importation of workers could have no adverse effect on domestic workers and that braceros could only be hired at the prevailing wage as determined by the secretary of labor. It also codified policies allowing bracero workers to elect their own representatives, disallowing their use as strikebreakers or to replace striking workers, and opening channels for workers to present grievances to various governmental or diplomatic bodies. But at the same time, it provided that only the governments of the two countries could negotiate the terms of the contracts by which braceros

* Calavita, *Inside the State*, 45, says it was "fifteen minutes" after.

were hired: workers were to be *subject* to their contracts, rather than *party* to them. The party representing the workers was, in the way that both the international agreement and the standard work contract dovetailed, the Mexican government. It, presumably, bargained on behalf of Mexican workers.[36]

And here is where the process utterly failed both bracero and domestic workers. PL 78 had no provisions for how "prevailing wages," "labor shortage," or "adverse effect" were to be determined, and the international agreement presented growers with what Galarza called "an undiluted victory" when it stipulated the prevailing wage was to be determined by the U.S. secretary of labor alone, because that provision closed off the possibility for wage bargaining. As one of the parties to the international agreement and standard work contract, the Mexican government (much less the worker himself) had no role in determining wages to be paid.* Historically, by contrast, growers had determined the "prevailing wage" to be whatever they wanted to pay, a determination more often than not ratified by the USDL.[37]

If the process failed the workers, it certainly did not fail the growers. While growers were required to pay the transportation and subsistence costs of workers as they were being transported from contracting centers to their places of work, the federal government paid the cost of administration and compliance. In 1952, the USDL alone shelled out almost $1.2 million in direct costs.† Some untold additional costs were borne by the INS, federal, state, and county public health authorities, and by the California DoH, for work essential to the operation of the program. FPS employees, who became the key players in certifying need, determining prevailing wages, and presumably attempting to recruit domestic workers in the first place, were paid out of federal unemployment taxes, from which farmers were exempt.[38]

This does not mean growers were entirely satisfied with the program. In California a survey conducted by the FPS covering the use of braceros during the main fall harvest of 1951 found that some 39 percent of contracted workers quit before the expiration of their contracts, that growers using 22 percent of the workers expressed "general dissatisfaction" with their performance, and that the

* Through a whole range of committees and longstanding channels of communication, growers, by contrast, frequently had direct access to, and a crucial role in determining the actions of, the bureaucrats charged with administering the program. Besides the discussion in chapter 9 of the actions of the Regional Foreign Labor Operations Advisory Committee (RFLOAC) in California, see the brief comments in Hawley, "Politics of the Mexican Labor Issue," 162–63.

† The year 1952 was an inexpensive one. Between 1952 and 1959, the USDL would amass direct costs of $17,733,000 to administer the procurement and distribution of braceros—or an average of more than $2.2 million per year.

expenses of transportation (from labor camp to work site), housing, medical insurance, bookkeeping, and the like amounted to a high $52.26 per imported worker. The survey also reported that "twenty out of the 48 representative employers indicated some loss of production due to labor shortage," with 80 percent of the loss (or $360,000) occurring in the canning tomato harvest. "Part of the labor shortage," according to a Warren administration employee who summarized the survey's findings, "was caused by late deliveries of requested Mexican nationals, or due to premature departure of workers still needed in the tomato harvest," which, in fact, neatly summarizes, if with a certain spin, exactly what happened.[39]

And what happened was indicative of exactly how the operation of PL 78 was going to unfold over the rest of the program. With crop reporters predicting a record harvest (more than 148,000 acres were planted with tomatoes, almost twice the acreage of the previous year), with other estimates suggesting that the canning tomato harvest might break $50 million for the first time, and with prices to growers more than 35 percent higher than those in 1950 (from $22 to $30 per ton), the Agricultural Wage Division of the (federal) Wage Stabilization Board met in Stockton in late August to determine a wage ceiling for tomato picking. Authorized by the National Defense Act of 1950, and chaired by Paul Prasow, those attending the meeting heard testimony from growers and labor contractors, but union officials complained of inadequate warning of the meeting, inadequate time to prepare testimony, and essentially of being frozen out of the deliberations. In the wake of the hearing, the board set the wage ceiling for all pickings at twenty cents per fifty-pound box of round tomatoes and twenty-four cents per box of pear tomatoes, only a little more than what strikers had won the previous year for first picking (and considerably lower than what was paid in previous years for second or later pickings). In addition, the board authorized the reinstitution of the bonus system strikers had fought to eliminate the year before. Growers and labor contractors had a right to appeal the board's decision, but, apparently, the NFLU did not. Meeting in Salinas at its first ever California State Convention, the NFLU demanded a wage of twenty-five cents per fifty-pound box (a wage the regional director of the Wage Stabilization Board said was impossibly high) and warned that at the low wages approved by the board, skilled tomato pickers would shun the harvest.[40]

That seems to be precisely what happened. While the union's estimate that nearly one-third of the crop was lost due to a lack of skilled pickers seems an exaggeration, growers, echoed by James Bryant, director of the California Department of Employment, quickly complained of dire labor shortages in the rapidly ripening tomato harvest. In response, according to the FPS's Edward Hayes, the

state stepped up its importation efforts, assuring by the third week of September that around one thousand contracted Mexican Nationals were arriving in the state each day and were rapidly deployed "to provide help for California farmers in the emergency they now face, particularly in tomatoes and other perishable crops." Judging by the estimates—a harvest of perhaps $50 million and a crop loss of $360,000, or less than three-quarters of 1 percent—they were quite successful.[41]

They were also successful in cementing into place a pattern that was to hold for the remainder of the program. Wages were set at some unattractive level (though in this case by a federal board rather than directly by growers). When domestic workers were not forthcoming at this wage, the drive for braceros was pushed into high gear. So effective did this practice become that by the end of the decade, more than 80 percent of the pickers at work at the peak of the tomato harvest were braceros (many of the remainder were undocumented workers). During this period, wages stagnated at best. According to records of the California Department of Employment, the actual piece rate paid in the 1951 tomato harvest in San Joaquin County varied between 15¢ and 18¢ per fifty-pound box (whatever the ceiling that had been set), and the hourly rate—when offered—ranged between 80¢ and 90¢.* In 1952, the piece rate sunk to 12¢ and the following year to 11¢, where it stayed until 1958 when it rose again to 12¢. Hourly rates were 80¢ to 90¢ from 1952 to 1954, when they rose thereafter to between 85¢ and $1.00. In real terms, and using the highest reported wages, 1958 piece rates were only 61 percent and hourly rates 90 percent of those in 1951.† The vast majority of the harvest was picked piece rate and so in addition to the savings attendant upon stagnated or deflated wages, growers also gained through what was obviously a speedup in the fields.‡[42]

* If reports of the National Agricultural Workers Union (NAWU) (the new name of the NFLU) are correct, then seeing the 1951 hourly rate of 80¢ to 90¢ or the piece rate of 15¢ to 18¢ as a *range* is inaccurate. In Stockton, according to the union, growers were paying 90¢ an hour and sometimes more; but the California Packing Corporation (Del Monte) was certified for Mexican Nationals at 80¢, and growers generally were able to receive Nationals for between 14¢ and 16¢. NAWU, "Statement on the Operation and Effects of the International Executive Agreement," 8, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 8.

† Calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Inflation Calculator at http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl. For a not dissimilar calculation, see Rooney, "Effects of Imported Mexican Farm Labor." Rooney points out that in 1957, San Joaquin County's 85¢ an hour wage compared quite unfavorably both with agricultural wages in Oregon (where Mexican Nationals comprised only 4% of the seasonal labor force) of $1.00 to $1.50 an hour, and national and state factory wage rates ($2.05 and $2.31, respectively); 516–17.

‡ Prices paid to growers for tomatoes fluctuated significantly, but in real terms generally decreased over the same period, as yields and (generally) acreage increased. Real grower costs

It was not only a speedup: the very labor process was transformed. Where domestic workers had been able to refuse to undertake ancillary work during the harvest (such as moving empty boxes into the fields, cutting and stacking vines, etc.) so that they could concentrate on the picking for which they were paid piece rate, Mexican Nationals found themselves increasingly required to do such tasks, either at a lowered hourly rate or as part of the piece rate paid for picking. As President Truman had made clear, undocumented workers had little or no ability to contest such a transformation. And PL 78, the international agreement, and the standard work contract, with their prohibitions on striking and their excision of workers as parties to their own contracts—no less than the citrus grower cited at the outset of this chapter who came to quickly realize in the wake of PL 78 the value of short-term contracts for even the best workers—all made it just as clear that neither did braceros.

Such transformations of the labor *process*, little as they may seem, had, we will see in the following chapter, radically transformative effects on the labor *landscape*.

per acre also increased over the course of the period, by about 60 percent. In other words, stagnated wages were critical to setting off rising costs and decreasing prices: they were a key means for negotiating the squeeze farmers frequently felt between rising production costs and declining revenues. See Runsten and LeVeen, *Mechanization and Mexican Labor*, table 5.1, 101.

Squeezed

Capital's Geography

"FINANCE," RICHARD WALKER WRITES, "is the oxygen pumped into the engine of accumulation to make it run faster. Credit provides extra funds for investment and profit seeking, for the whole speculative process of anticipating future prospects and making them come true." Yet, "finance not only helped agribusiness's explosive spread across the landscape, financial excess also led to overplanting and price drops of a catastrophic kind." The "boom-and-bust cycles" that result "continue to rearrange the landscape of agribusiness, both literally and figuratively." Finance capital flows first into the hands of growers who *know* it and *feel* it in particular ways, according to George Henderson. There is no doubt that capitalist farmers have far more power to direct the shaping of the geographies within which they operate than do the workers who actually produce them, but for many growers—maybe less Joseph DiGiorgio, J. G. Boswell, O'Dwyer and Mets, or State Life Insurance than smaller farmers like some of those testifying at the Governor's Committee hearings either through the Grange or a county Farm Bureau or on their own, many of whom spoke eloquently of the constant financial pressures that beset them—that power was severely limited by the even greater power of the financial institutions (or packers and shippers) to which they were in hock, as well as by the costs of many factors of production over which they had little direct control: land, fertilizer, innovations in machinery that might give their competition an advantage, market prices, and so forth. There is no doubt, for example, that over the 1950s, as tomato acreage rapidly expanded and yields increased—an expansion and increase leveraged through loans from processors or credit institutions—real costs to growers rapidly increased (by 60%) while prices paid at the cannery or packing shed decreased. As the oxygen of finance was pumped into the engine of accumulation—leading to overplanting of such a degree that by 1959, "more than 60 percent of all [imported] Mexicans employed at peak [harvest] work in crops that are in surplus supply," according to a study commissioned by the secretary of labor—many growers were squeezed.[1]

As Henderson shows, the circulation of capital through the countryside often transformed the class position of the farmer. He quotes a vice president of a San Francisco bank in 1923: "What the bank wants is to keep the borrower

working," year after year, paying off this year's loan with the proceeds of the harvest before taking out another loan to prepare the following year's crop. As Henderson explains, "The loan comes very close to representing a piece-rate wage [to the farmer]. To the extent that this is so, the farmer may be a wage-paying industrial capitalist at harvest time but now a proletarian at the beginning of the season." Moreover, through this process, the banker becomes both a "rent-seeking money seller and industrial capitalist. . . . Insofar as the banker is a *piece-rate-paying* industrial capitalist (who extracts surplus in the form of interest-laden debt at the end of the farmer's term as industrial capitalist), there is a *check* on the farmer as industrial capitalist," a check that can only be overcome if the "farmer can accumulate and come to own land," which not only threatens the rents sought by the banks but also, once again changes the class status of the farmer, who now, often, becomes a landlord to a crop of smaller-farming leaseholders, a collector of rents more than a grower of crops. In turn, it is now these leaseholders who feel the squeeze.[2]

The question, then, is how to negotiate the squeeze—a squeeze that is not only applied from the side of capital circulation, but also from the side of what Marx described as a struggle for relative surplus value. Finance might be the oxygen of the engine of accumulation, leading to bouts of overaccumulation, but the engine's gears are calibrated by "socially necessary labor time"—that social average in any production process that determines the *rate* of surplus value production. Individual capitalists can capture a larger share of the total surplus value produced (in winter lettuce, say) by finding ways to produce *faster* (more products in the same amount of time) than their competitors. Any such advantage, however, is destined to be temporary, as these self-same competitors replicate whatever innovation it was that had allowed the speedup. Innovation becomes general, the relative advantage is lost (in the process, some capitalists inevitably fall by the wayside, leading to a greater concentration of capital in fewer hands, a tendency offset not only by new entrants into the market, if opportunity arises—irrigation opening up a new farming frontier, for example, or changes in consumer taste opening new niches—but also, in California farming, by the pushing of risk downward, onto the shoulders of leaseholders). In the processes, albeit in farming deeply conditioned by the facts of nature, more and more is produced, faster and faster. Socially necessary labor time is reduced, prices fall, and the volume of surplus value per unit produced decreases. The search for another speedup, another innovation, commences anew as capitalists seek to maintain or better their *total* rate of accumulation. The squeeze tightens. And woe betide those who cannot find a market for all the stuff they are now producing. For them, letting crops rot in the fields can often be pref-

erable to the expense and hassle of finding a buyer who won't adequately recompense them anyway—preferable except for the fact that they are in hock to their financiers (or the owners of the land they farm). Land goes in and out of production; canning plants burst into production or stand idle and abandoned (no matter the productive life left in the machinery they house); the specific geographies of accumulation are revolutionized.[3]

This is, of course, totally crazy. But it is the way capitalism, including capitalist farming, works, even if the neat logic of the process is continually confounded by messy realities of struggling to grow crops for a profit. This logic drives not just how capitalist farming works, but also, particularly, the work of capitalist farming. The struggle to garner more of the total relative surplus value is expressed through innovation in machinery (and thus, often, the substitution of constant capital [machinery, etc.] for variable capital [labor power]), but it is even more expressed through revolutions in the *labor process*—the organization of work. The organization of work is complex, can be historically contradictory or confounding (the reintroduction of sharecropping into California strawberry production beginning in the 1960s, for example, took many observers and theorists by surprise, especially since it represented, to a degree, a substitution of something like variable capital for constant capital), and is necessarily struggled over. Indeed, as Miriam Wells makes clear, it is vital to understand "how political structures and conflicts permeate daily work life, how they affect the options, perceptions, and initiatives of class actors in certain industries and locations." Even more, however, it is vital to understand how transformations in the labor process itself—those specific ways of harvesting lettuce, for example, together with the way that harvest is socially organized—permeate those "political structures and conflicts." Labor processes are the pistons of the engine of capital accumulation, and how they are shaped and how they fire—their order, their frequency—must be closely understood.[4]

Farmers know that. Continually fiddling with these pistons, hauling them in for a tune-up, as it were, is one way they seek always to possess a *better* engine of accumulation. Unfortunately for them, workers are often a bit less amenable to manipulation than might be a piston. Much work on labor process theory is deeply interested in its sociology—struggles for control over work, for example, the rise of managerialism—but often the truly interesting question is the way that control over work is shaped by (and shapes) the actual ways work is *done*: beets blocked and thinned with a short-handled hoe rather than a long one or lettuce cut by stooped workers in the field but sorted and boxed mechanically on a machine following them rather than in a packing house in the nearest farm town. These matter to the sociology of the labor process, deeply (as the studies

of Wells and of Robert Thomas on gender, citizenship, and the labor process in lettuce show so well, even if the importance of their close focus on the actual doing of labor often gets overlooked by those who draw on their insights).[5]

They also matter geographically. Transformations in the labor process transform not only how crops are grown, but where, and under what sort of conditions (larger or smaller fields, with or without irrigation, in an integrated or geographically separate process of picking and packing, etc.). The squeeze growers constantly feel in their struggles to grow a profit (and keep at least some of it out of the hands of the financiers) is managed, sometimes, by jiggering the labor process, and sometimes *therefore* transferring the effects of the squeeze—the pain—onto the shoulders (or perhaps the aching lower back) of workers.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Labor Process, Laboring Life

We further certify to you this increase in the certification of Mexican Nationals for the Imperial Valley Farmers Association will not supplant one single domestic agricultural laborer.

Tom Finney, Manager, El Centro and Brawley Offices, Farm Placement Service, California Department of Employment, July 7, 1952

We have been advised by our San Francisco office that it is a general practice to charge a minimum fee [to workers] which is less than the actual cost for the carrot [tying] wires. This is done to prohibit the wasting of ties by the individual workers. The rate paid for tieing varies according to whether or not a charge is made for the ties. This is indicated in the letter submitted by your office and is a general practice, we understand, throughout California. . . . It was pointed out by our San Francisco regional office that without this charge the workers would be very careless and wasteful and destroy many ties.

Secretary of Labor Maurice Tobin to Representative Cecil King (D-Calif.), ca. July 1952

There is no doubt that this change to field packing of the lettuce crop has caused extreme hardship to many workers and their families in Imperial Valley. Shed employment this year is under 700 when previously employment has been about 3,000. Loss of this well-paid seasonal work has been a source of concern to the workers and also to merchants in the area. Field pack work conditions differ greatly from the shed. Piece work rates, as set up on a crew basis, are about the same as rates paid in the shed but due to lower production in the field, most crews earn only the guarantee of 70¢ per hour per man. Accordingly, very few shed workers have shown an interest in packing lettuce in the field. The fact that jobs held by Mexican Nationals are available to domestic workers has been well publicized.

Don C. Park, Farm Placement Supervisor, California Department of Employment to Edward F. Hayes, Chief, Farm Placement Service, February 18, 1954

ON DECEMBER 4, 1949, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that a "new monster" lettuce-harvesting machine was then at work in the Salt River Valley (Arizona) harvest. Invented in Salinas, the machine—essentially a series of conveyer belts on wheels—stretched across twelve beds (twenty-four rows) of lettuce and commanded a crew of thirty-four (including machine and truck drivers). Twelve workers—one to each bed—walked ahead of the machine cutting lettuce heads and placing them in the center of the beds. Eight workers followed behind, picking up the heads and placing them on one of the belts. Another eight workers sat on the machine catching the heads as they moved past and packing them in crates that had been handed onto another belt by a man working from the back of an attending truck. When crates were full, they slid along the belt to an automatic lidding machine, where two other workers snatched them off the belt and placed them back on the truck. When all the crates on the truck had been filled, the truck drove off to a waiting refrigerated car. The packing house, where once lettuce had been sent to be crated and iced, was no longer part of the harvest process. But because lettuce was not iced—it was "dry packed" in the terms of the field—the high temperatures of the heads made them more susceptible to rotting than lettuce packed in ice at the packing sheds. Therefore, harvesting with this new machine was done almost entirely at night, under the glare of floodlights mounted on the top of the harvester.[1]

Labor Process and Labor Struggle

Field packing, which eliminated the work of the packinghouse, was much to be desired. Besides the savings incumbent upon doing away with several steps in the labor process, the cost for ice and perhaps even wooden crates could be eliminated as well (without ice, cardboard could be used). At least as important, from the grower-shippers' perspective, was the fact that packinghouse workers were largely unionized, and field packing would greatly undermine their power. But the problem of heat in the dry pack remained a problem. Concurrent with the experiments with the new "monster" lettuce harvest machine, therefore, other inventors and engineers in the Salinas Valley, drawing on advances in vacuum technology made during the war, experimented with a "precooling" process for the lettuce. Prepacked crates of lettuce were deposited in a large steel tube and all the air was sucked out. The decreased pressure in the tube quickly evaporated the moisture in the lettuce heads, cooling them from the inside out—a significant advance over ice, which cooled from the outside in, but often not thoroughly enough for rot at the warm center to be entirely prevented. Prototypes of the vacuum-cooled system were built near Watsonville in 1946,

and by 1948 "the system was working and could be used on a commercial scale, but the project had neither the necessary financing nor a facility large enough to handle the volume of lettuce produced in the Valley" until the mammoth Garin Company stepped in to test the process's viability, according to historian Gabrielle Petrick. Wide-scale adoption was delayed by, among other things, lagging technology in refrigerated rail cars, which lacked fans to recirculate chilled air, causing warm spots and spoilage of uniced lettuce. When Pacific Freight Express, the predominant rail company shipping lettuce, retrofitted its cars with fans in 1952, the technology spread more quickly, and soon there were numerous vacuum cooling plants not only in the Salinas, but also in the other major lettuce-growing region of the state, the Imperial.*[2]

It did not take long for packinghouse workers to begin losing their jobs. Salinas resident Clyde Carter and his wife wrote to new Governor Goodwin Knight in October 1953 to complain of their jobs being taken by braceros.† This letter drew a sharp response from the FPS's Edward Hayes, who noted that "strict controls [are] exercised over the employment of Mexican National contract labor by both the U.S. Government and the State of California, to protect the American citizen and their work opportunities. It is, therefore, a surprise to us that a complaint such as yours is being made." Rather than Mexican Nationals, Hayes said, "the workers referred to" were probably "illegal Mexicans known as 'Wetbacks' who have come to this country seeking work outside the International Agreement with Mexico" and whom the INS, with its lack of sufficient personnel, was unable "to apprehend and return to Mexico."[3]

In fact, subsequent investigation by the FPS showed that the Carters had indeed lost their jobs to braceros, if indirectly.‡ The Carters, among numerous

* Many of the major lettuce firms—Bud Antle, Bruce Church, D'Arrigo, Garin, Englund—produced crops in both the Salinas and Imperial valleys, and sometimes in Arizona. They frequently also had operations in Riverside County, the southern San Joaquin, valleys of the Central Coast, and elsewhere. Antle and Church teamed together to monopolize the patents on vacuum cooling, later selling them to "an industry-created organization." Friedland, Barton, and Thomas, *Manufacturing Green Gold*, 78–79.

† Knight ascended to governor when Earl Warren resigned upon becoming chief justice of the Supreme Court on October 5, 1953; he was elected in his own right in 1954 and served until Edmund G. "Pat" Brown was inaugurated in January 1959.

‡ The FPS did not evidence much sympathy for the Carters: as Hayes informed Governor Knight's department secretary, the Service had looked into the background of the Carters and discovered that "Mrs. Carter has not been a member in good standing of Local 78 [of the packinghouse union] . . . for the past six months . . . and that representatives of the Union appeared pleased that she had sought other employment than that provided by her union." Hayes to Fairbank, November 10, 1953, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

others, were laid off as field packing of lettuce took hold in the Salinas Valley (by 1955, 95% of the crop there was field packed). According to the FPS, "the largest percentage of workers in the field packing of lettuce are legally contracted Mexican Nationals." This was a rapid transformation. In 1950, braceros comprised only 4 percent of seasonal field labor in Monterey County (home of Salinas). By 1953, when the Carters lodged their complaint, they comprised an even 50 percent (and by 1959, 72%). In 1955, when nearly all the lettuce in both the Salinas and Imperial valleys was field packed, bracero labor accounted for 75 percent of all activities—from planting and thinning, to cutting and packing. According to Hayes, the increasing domination of braceros in the Salinas Valley was due to the fact that "the jobs on which most Mexican Nationals are employed are generally unacceptable to American workers. Field cutting and packing of lettuce," Hayes averred, "required workers to remain in a stooped position all day long" and work "in Salinas Valley would never get done were it not for the Mexican Nationals."[4]

Of course, there was something else shaping the question of acceptability of work than just the difficulty of stoop labor.* In 1954, when some of the crop in the Salinas was still packed in sheds, shed packers and trimmers earned $1.62.5 and $1.32.5 per hour, respectively; field workers—pickers and packers—earned 87.5¢ per hour. Additionally, field packing moved the work out of the sheds, which were covered by the National Labor Relations Act, and into the fields, which were not. Facing harder work, lower wages, and fewer protections, it is hardly surprising that many shed workers shunned field jobs.[5]

The move to field packing—which eliminated not only packinghouse jobs, but also a significant number of other jobs as ice factories closed and icing of rail cars was no longer necessary—caused what longtime packinghouse employee (and immediate past-mayor of Salinas) E. J. Raffeto described in 1954 as "an economic crisis" in the Salinas, and what the FPS's Don Park called "extreme hardship" for domestic workers in the Imperial. Park was in the Imperial Valley to investigate the complaints of Agnes L. Landrum, a longtime packinghouse union member, who had also written to Governor Knight complaining of losing her job in a packing shed to braceros. When Park called on Mrs. Landrum, she was not in, having "just started work in a carrot packing shed" in El Centro. Park was able to inform her husband, however, "that if a qualified domestic worker is interested in doing this work under field operating conditions, either the Brawley Farm Labor Office or the El Centro local office would give im-

* And there is no doubt it is difficult, indeed backbreaking, as is made abundantly clear in the descriptions of lettuce work in Thomas, *Citizenship, Gender, and Work*, 1–3, 92–102.

mediate referral." Chances were, however, when Park was writing, neither *Mrs*. Landrum nor *Mrs*. Carter would be considered "qualified."[6]

Following a three-day investigation of conditions in the Salinas Valley, William A. Burkett, the director of the California Department of Employment, announced on August 6, 1954, that "the area's unemployment is the result of technological changes in the lettuce industry," and that "charges by officials of the CIO United Packinghouse Workers union that the Department of Employment has not enforced existing laws governing the use of contract Mexican National workers were not substantiated."* The technological change was the move to field packing; the charge by the union was that when women who had formerly been employed in the packinghouses applied for field positions, jobs for which they presumably had priority by law over braceros, they were uniformly denied work. Growers asserted that not only were women unqualified for the work (because they were women), but as importantly, "the lettuce industry for the last 30 years had not used women in the field," claiming that because of that precedent it was a logical impossibility that braceros were being used in preference to women domestic workers, a position that the Department of Employment seemed to endorse. It was not only gender at stake, though that was important. Field packing was not in fact labor-*saving* technology; it required an increase in the number of workers in the field. It also required a reorientation of skill, which ought to have placed upward pressure on wages. But access to a full supply of braceros, who could be paid at prevailing field rates established under former conditions (separate field and packing operations), assured there would be "*no* increase in wage rates between 1952 and 1958." The very move to field packing "was feasible," according to Judith Chanin Glass, "because Public Law 78 assured growers of an adequate supplemental source of labor" during the technological transition. At the very least the bracero program *hastened* the switch to field packing because flat wages assured a lessening of the squeeze between rising capital costs and steady lettuce market prices.[7]

This is true even though, a week after Burkett's announcement that "we believe the employers are not violating the law when" they refused to hire women, the Department of Employment, operating on the advice of the USDL, changed tack (but did not really reverse course) when it announced it would begin re-

* Burkett's trip to Salinas was designed to forestall a planned march on Sacramento by packinghouse workers. "Packers Union Blames Use of Import Labor," *Modesto Bee*, August 5, 1954, 20. Officials in the UPWA had begun complaining to the Department of Employment about discrimination against women in the field the previous spring. See V. Mitchell to Knight, telegram, May 18, 1954; Rucker to Hays, May 21, 1954; Burkett to V. Mitchell, May 27, 1954; V. Mitchell to Mercer, June 4, 1954, all in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

ferring women to field pack jobs where braceros were employed. Upon a request from the Department of Employment, the USDL ruled that "under Public Law 78, 'employers may not restrict orders to male workers provided females are qualified and available for jobs for which Mexican workers are required.'" Though it would begin making referrals, Burkett also reminded the public that "the Department of Employment has no authority to specify how employers shall have their work performed," and therefore "the final decision as to whether the women will be employed must rest with the women and the employers." Burkett was also careful to note that "most of these women" looking for work in Salinas "have never worked in the lettuce fields and there is sincere doubt in the minds of the growers that they are practically able to perform the field jobs."[8]

As tentative as this ruling was, it induced howls of protest from Salinas growers, who flooded the governor's office with calls and telegrams. Particularly incensed was S. V. Christierson, president of the Major Distributing Company in Salinas, a director of the CFBF, and, according to a 1942 profile, a claimant to the title of "Carrot King." Christierson "was quite angry with the Governor," and assistants to Knight were afraid that with the ruling about women workers, "the Governor might be running into a hornet's nest." A meeting with the governor was quickly called, to which were invited Christierson, two other large growers, the secretary-manager of the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association (the major growers association in the Salinas Valley), Glenn Brockway of the BES (the chief federal overseer of the bracero program in California), Burkett, Hayes, and the principal legal counsel of the Department of Labor (but no representatives of organized labor). At this meeting, according to Burkett, a satisfactory "understanding with these gentlemen" was reached, "making it unnecessary to direct a formal answer [about their complaints about women and non-bracero workers] to them in writing." Of course, it is not clear from the record what this "understanding" might have entailed; but, as noted, what is clear is that in the ensuing years, male bracero workers increasingly displaced both male and female domestic lettuce field workers, while lettuce shed packing jobs (in which women found relatively steady, fairly decent-paying jobs) disappeared altogether. What is also clear is that with the wide-scale switch to field packing and vacuum cooling, the ground was prepared for the thoroughgoing adoption of "new monster" lettuce-harvesting machines—machines that subordinated pickers' work to the tempo of the conveyor belt—like that tested in Arizona in 1949, only now such machines did not have to be used only at night.[9]

If changes in labor process transformed, while reinforcing, gender divisions of labor, they also opened up intertwined questions of race, citizenship, and union jurisdiction. Complaints about displacement due to the shift from

shed to field packing, and the refusal of Salinas bracero users to hire domestic women workers, were lodged with the governor and the Department of Employment by officers of the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA, CIO), Local 78, which, as its power in the sheds was eroding, was beginning a campaign of field-worker organizing. Virgil Mitchell, a former Salinas journalist and Independent Progressive Party (IPP) activist in the 1948 elections, was appointed to head the campaign, and, according to Galarza, he had at his disposal the staff of the FTA, which had been expelled from the CIO in early 1950 for its refusal to scour its ranks for Communists. The connection to the IPP and FTA reinforced, for the anticommunists Galarza and H. L. Mitchell, the strong communist sympathies and probable Communist Party membership of a number of UPWA officers and organizers. While Galarza reported that he did not think UPWA had much support from other CIO unions, he, along with members of the AFL Central Labor Council in Salinas, was concerned that UPWA had considerable financial resources and was intent on invading AFL's turf in general and Galarza's union—now called the NAWU—in particular.* The AFL pledged not to honor UPWA picket lines. On this threat, according to Galarza, the UPWA had begun talking about a joint organizing campaign with the NAWU, though Galarza was not convinced its intentions were genuine.[10]

As much as the jurisdictional stakes involved, what worried Galarza was how the UPWA drive was playing into the hands of growers by "sharpen[ing] the hostilities of the shed oakies [sic] and the [domestic] field Mexicans." This was because, in Galarza's estimation, UPWA organizers failed to sufficiently understand the distinctions between domestic ethnic Mexican workers in the fields, contract Mexican Nationals imported under PL 78 and the international agreement, and the steady influx of undocumented workers from Mexico. "Should the [UPWA] take a determined stand" in favor of shed workers taking field positions without consideration of the rights of ethnic Mexican workers to those jobs, "then we will have a difficult dilemma in that there will not be enough jobs immediately available for all displaced shed workers," and a deep struggle *among* domestic workers would be ignited. "The growers are beginning to realize this," Galarza argued. The combined effects of the jurisdictional battle

* The NFLU changed its name to the NAWU at its national convention late in 1952. Don Watson provides a detailed account of the internecine struggles between NFLU/NAWU, UPWA, and (the later) Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) and makes a convincing case that Galarza's and Mitchell's anticommunism severely hobbled their abilities to build a viable union *within* the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), and thus, no doubt, impaired their effectiveness on the ground throughout the bracero era. Watson, "Mixed Melody."

and heightened racial tension required, Galarza felt, that the NAWU "press for a showdown on this entire front" since "the speed of the [UPWA] campaign and the pressure of unemployment in the fields and sheds do not permit further delay," though Galarza was not overly optimistic about the results.[11]

He was not overly optimistic despite the relative prestige NAWU seemed to have among both domestic and bracero field workers in the Salinas Valley, prestige perhaps equaling that which the UPWA was gaining by its defense of displaced women lettuce workers.* NAWU's prestige derived not only from its struggles in the San Joaquin tomato harvest and the spring harvests of the Imperial Valley, but also from a significant victory the union won on another question of labor process. This was the question of who was to pay for the carrot tie-wires, known as "twistems," used to bundle the harvested vegetables. Twistems typically were covered in a paper wrapping advertising the grower (e.g., "Arena's") or the brand (e.g., "Andy Boy," from D'Arrigo Bros.). Working an assigned section of a field—known as a claim—a carrot picker squatted or crawled on her or his knees, sorted by size and grade bunches of carrots that had been pulled to the surface by a machine, and quickly twisted a wire around each bunch, before bundling the bunches into groups of six and tying those larger bundles off with another, longer twistem.[12]

As growers in both the Imperial and the Salinas turned to the new, steadier pool of braceros made available by PL 78 and the new international agreement—a pool with little or no power to contest the terms of its contract and readily supplemented as needed by undocumented workers—growers sought to spread the practice of charging pickers for the cost of the twistems they used. Already in April 1951, the union had objected to this practice, informing Tom Finney of the FPS in El Centro that it could not refer its members to the FPS in response to a call for a thousand carrot tiers for the harvest then moving into full swing: "The wage conditions offered by the employers are not attractive. They include deductions for twistems which we feel should be paid by the growers." The union implied the ready availability of both "'illegals' and Contract nationals" was responsible for the ability of growers to shunt this cost onto the harvest workers.[13]

In 1951, in the Salinas Valley, wages for carrot tying were 28¢ to 30¢ a crate.

* UPWA seemed to have made the most of the displacement of women workers in the Salinas Valley, but their displacement there and in the Imperial was also of direct concern to NAWU, and it too sought to highlight the ways in which bracero workers displaced domestic women breadwinners. See NAWU, "Statement on the Operation and Effects of the International Executive Agreement of 1951 for the Recruitment and Employment of Mexican Nationals in Agriculture in the U.S." (ca. 1952), 10, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 8.

Growers charged carrot workers 32¢ for 4 rolls of 250 short wires (for the individual bunches); the long wires for the bundles of 6 bunches were provided for free. In 1952, with wages essentially unchanged, growers charged 65¢ for 3 rolls of 250 "shorts" and 1 roll of longer wires. By NAWU calculations, this latter "short thousand" of twistems tied 21 field crates of carrots. At this rate, though highly variable because of the piece-rate system and the fact that workers typically could not return unused wires, charges for twistems typically amounted to between 10 and 12 percent of wages. NAWU called these charges a "toll . . . on the right to work," and the rise in cost of twistems between 1951 and 1952 represented a rise in this toll from the 4 percent it had been. The question the union pressed, however, was not primarily one of increased cost to the worker—in essence, a decline in wages—but especially whether this charge was a legal deduction from wages in the first place.[14]

The USDL seemed to hold there was nothing wrong with the charge for tie-wires. As Labor Secretary Maurice Tobin wrote to California Representative Cecil King in July 1952, not only were such charges common throughout California and essential to assuring there was no wastage of wires by workers, but (contradictorily) "in reality no charge is made for the carrot ties as workers paying for the ties are paid at a higher rate than workers not paying for ties." There is no evidence such differential wages were associated with charges for twistems. In fact, there is much evidence against the claim,* including from the USDL's own BES, which ruled in August that charges for twistems could be made to contract Nationals because they were part of the "prevailing wage" and the "manner of payment" for carrot work in California.[15]

Ernesto Galarza, on behalf of NAWU, immediately objected. Article 1(c) of the Migrant Labor Agreement (the international agreement) of 1951 held that "wages" meant "all form of remuneration to a Mexican worker by an employer for personal services including, but not limited to, subsistence, incentive payments, employer contributions to or payments of insurance benefits, employer contributions to a pension fund or annuity, and payments in kind." Galarza pointed out, reasonably, that a *charge* for twistems "cannot by any kind of argument be transformed into 'remuneration'" whether it was a common practice or not. Moreover, the union had been collecting paystubs of carrot tiers, and on them "the charge for Twistems appears as a 'deduction.' Obviously a 'deduction' cannot be 'wages prevailing in the area of employment.'" The union held

* Galarza presents evidence that in the Imperial, at least, wages declined even as prices charged carrot tiers for twistems went up in 1952. Galarza to Mitchell and nine others, "The Situation in the Imperial Valley," February 15, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 11.

that the charge was in fact an illegal deduction from wages, whether paid by domestic workers, braceros, or undocumented workers, because what it really represented was an involuntary contribution by workers to the *capital costs* of the employers, for which they received no benefit.[16]

Indeed, in an analysis secured by Galarza, San Francisco labor lawyer Robert Le Prohn argued that "board or lodging 'or other facilities'" could "be considered as part of the wages paid to the employee" under Section 3(m) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, only if they were not primarily provided "for the benefit or convenience of the employer." "It appears," Le Prohn continued, "that an expenditure for vegetable bunch tie strings containing the employers advertising is clearly an expenditure of the type classified by the administrator for the convenience and benefit of the employer. By requiring the employee to pay for such strings the employer is forcing the employee to make a capital contribution to the marketing of the vegetables. If such be the case then a share of the return going to capital should also be allocated to the employees. This share to be calculated over and above the share going to employees for their actual labor, i.e. as wages. Since such a procedure is not followed, it seems clear that the employees should not be required to make such a capital contribution." To make his case, Le Prohn attached synopses of seventeen cases decided by the War Labor Board during World War II, which "indicate[d] a line of thought similar to that followed by the F.L.S.A. Administrator." In addition to these general prohibitions, according to the union, there was a further prohibition in the international agreement governing bracero importation on charges for tools, supplies, or equipment.[17]

Even as the USDL was announcing it would "examine" the issue of charging braceros for twistems (providing no timeline for the completion of its examination), NAWU filed a complaint with the California labor commissioner (in the DIR), alleging that the coerced purchase of twistems violated California Labor Code Section 450, which barred employers from compelling or coercing employees or applicants into "the purchase of a thing of value," and Section 226, which required accurate accounting of wage deductions on paystubs. This latter section was brought to the fore when the union found its growing publicity around the twistem charge was leading a number of growers to demand upfront cash payments for the wires. It also pressed the case with the Mexican embassy, charging violations of the international agreement.[18]

Growers defended their practice in a number of ways. Their basic defense was that the charge was necessary to eliminate waste of wires in the field. The union responded that the growers presented no "facts and argument" in defense of this claim, and in the course of hearings, growers in fact "evaded and

abandoned" the argument, "although it was they who raised it."* Growers argued that carrot tiers were not employees, but independent contractors because workers chose their own claims. The union countered that this was not true—claims were assigned—and even if it was, it would do nothing to lessen the compulsory nature of the transactions. It argued strenuously, in fact, that the "conditions under which carrot tieing is done . . . have been determined, not [by] mutual consent between parties of equal or approximately equal bargaining position." For braceros the lack of independence in this transaction was especially acute. "Anyone who has seen the contracting procedures" for Mexican Nationals at the contracting centers in Mexico, Galarza elsewhere wrote, "will testify that the National never bargains with the employers. He rarely even reads the contract. A large percentage of the Nationals are illiterate. Many of these men waited months to sign up. They were dead broke, hungry and homeless. To suggest that a representative of a multi-million dollar corporation . . . is forced to bargain on even terms with a National under such conditions is to try the patience of reasonable men." Some braceros lived, because of deductions for twistems among other items, in a state of virtual debt peonage, receiving "what might be described as 'minus' pay checks," when they were unable to tie enough carrots to pay back the cost of their wires. Furthermore, the union argued, braceros were covered by a standard work contract that on the one hand seemed to outlaw deductions such as this, but on the other, disallowed them from contesting the practice even if it didn't. They were, for all intents and purposes, "indentured to the employers."[19]

Growers asserted that charging for twistems was a long-established custom. NAWU countered that this did not make it "equitable, just, practical [or] universally acceptable"; nor did it address the fact that growers did not *always* assess these charges (particularly favored workers, for example, were often given the wires for free; at other times when growers needed to attract pickers quickly, they would waive the fee). Growers noted the government had heretofore not objected to the practice. The union accepted this point, but again asserted that it made no difference to the legality of the practice; it also noted one reason the government did not sanction the practice was because workers had to this point not been strong enough to press a claim—evidence of the compulsory

* For braceros at least, the standard work contract, Article 6(f), already provided for restitution of "any loss to the employer due to the Mexican worker's refusal or negligent failure to return any property furnished him by the employer or due to such worker's willful damage or destruction of such property." "Standard Work Contract, as Amended," in California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1, appendix G, exhibit 6, 288.

nature of the transaction. This was also the union's answer to the grower claim that workers had long accepted the practice themselves. Growers also claimed the purchase of twistems was not compulsory, because pickers were free to purchase them from a store. Germain's in Salinas was the only outlet where they were available, and, as the union showed, the retail price it charged workers for the wires in 1952 ($2.50 per short 1,000) was more than twice what it charged growers who bought them in bulk ($1.16 per short 1,000), allowing growers to sell them to workers for 65¢ per short 1,000 and make up much of their costs.[20]

Mostly, however, growers argued that the charge for twistems was merely a "bookkeeping" device. "As the Union understands this line of explanation when the tier obtains the wires a bookkeeping charge is made against him of 65 cents per thousand. When he turns in the tied carrots, on which he has used a thousand wires, he is given a bookkeeping credit of 65 cents. In the words of the growers brief, 'he pays nothing, he buys nothing.' The object of this is to avoid 'heavy losses in waste.'" But NAWU's examination of paystubs showed this simply was not true. The stated rate of pay was 30¢ per crate. Wire cost carrot tiers approximately 2.5¢ per crate. If the charge were merely a bookkeeping transaction, then the cost of wires (65¢ per short 1,000) would be debited when the tier received the wire; 30¢ wages would be credited for each crate turned in; and a further 2.5¢ per crate would also be credited for the returned wire (now wrapped around the carrots). At the end of employment credit would be given for all returned wire. The worker would in the end "pay nothing . . . buy nothing." The union found *no* evidence of these latter two credits in any of the paystubs and vouchers it examined. Rather, workers were simply charged for the twistems, making the effective pay 27.5¢ per crate, not the stated (and in the case of braceros, contracted) rate of 30¢. Furthermore, growers typically refused to accept unused wires back from workers: they were theirs to take home (or, as we saw in the previous chapter, theirs with which to *make* their home). When growers did accept unused wires, it raised a new problem: if tiers were credited for their unused wires when they were returned, then why were they not credited for the *used* wires? Acceptance of returned unused wires, when it happened, proved the union's point: workers were being charged for the wires. This was not a bookkeeping transaction. Indeed, by NAWU's calculations (based on the number of crates shipped), growers in the Salinas Valley deducted some $105,000 from a wage bill of $1.05 million through this "mere bookkeeping transaction" during the 1952–53 season.[21]

Even before the labor commissioner could rule, many in the DIR's Division of Labor Law Enforcement were convinced "the charge for twistems is contrary to law," and were contemplating "the possibility of civil action through which a

court determination could be obtained."* The division had ruled out a criminal prosecution because the district attorney in Salinas (through whom the division would have to work) was "unconvinced" the charge violated the labor code. The plans for civil action were preempted at the end of April 1953, however, when new Labor Secretary Martin P. Durkin announced an agreement had been reached with Mexico that such charges violated the terms of the international agreement. With the state labor commissioner's ruling, "based on identical evidence" pending (which would have been binding on domestic workers), the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association and other employers in the Salinas Valley abandoned the practice of deducting for twistems altogether.[22]

NAWU promised it would initiate a series of lawsuits designed to win back pay for affected workers. As H. L. Mitchell wrote, "The . . . ruling on the Twistem matter is a victory for the Union and if prompt action is taken by local officers and organizers, this victory can be used to build Union membership in many areas of California. You can tell any worker who has had the cost of twistems deducted from wages that a claim will be filed on his behalf if he is a member of the Union." The union was unable to follow through on its promise, however, because its own funds were insufficient and neither the national AFL nor the CFL was willing to bankroll such an effort on behalf of farm workers, only a small percentage of whom were union members. However, NAWU did, as we will soon see, manage to use this victory to bolster a campaign to sign up braceros as union members.[23]

But the victory was important for another reason. It showed the labor processes in carrots—the actual practices governing *how* work was to be done, and by whom—was, as it was in the lettuce fields, a product of struggle, not merely a product of custom or dictate. Even if this struggle was rarely an even one, even if, that is, an analysis of the struggles that determine the labor process must be closely attuned to the relations of power that structure the *terrain* of struggle, it was a struggle nonetheless, and one that had tangible effects beyond its immediate environs. The rule against twistem deductions operated in the Imperial Valley, the Santa Clara Valley, and the new vegetable districts developing in the San Joaquin as irrigation opened up new lands, just as it operated in the Salinas. And in each of these places, more was at stake than just who paid for the wire

* There was also considerable interest in this case in law and farm labor activist circles. The union's struggle to have the charges rescinded and back pay returned to workers attracted, among others, a letter from James Murray of the Markuse and Murray law firm in Los Angeles, volunteering assistance. Galarza and Murray were to have a long and productive relationship, especially as the DiGiorgio–*Poverty in the Valley of Plenty* controversy reignited in the early 1960s. Murray to Galarza, February 17, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 3.

used to tie carrots into bunches. As Galarza wrote in one brief to the state labor commissioner, "As the growers have stated in one hearing, through their counsel, if no charge is made for the wire 'we would lose control of the situation.'"[24]

The Problem of Representation

"Control of the situation" was always threatening to slip out of growers' hands.* This was especially true of the "situation" defined by public relations. When, in October 1952, the Associated Farmers branded as "ridiculous" NAWU's claims that deductions for twistems were illegal, it made a special point of arguing that not only were the charges baseless, but they were made by a baseless organization. "The AFL agricultural union has no membership of consequence in California," claimed Associated Farmers Executive Secretary Charles Gibbs. "All they do is go around trying to make false reports to anyone who will listen to them."[25]

One whom NAWU hoped would listen, especially given what it saw as the general apathy of Mexican consuls in California, was the Mexican ambassador in Washington. In September 1952, according to news reports, workers in the Salinas Valley "passed the hat" to buy a bus ticket for a bracero, Francisco Hernandez Cano (who had had his contract cancelled for wearing a union button and calling in the Mexican consul to investigate conditions on the ranch where he worked), to travel to D.C. to personally meet the ambassador and tell him about appalling work and living conditions, withheld pay, and other matters.† While in Washington, Hernandez Cano also met with Robert Goodwin, director of the BES and the point person for USDL for the operation of the labor importation program. Representing some 3,200 braceros in the Salinas Valley, Hernandez Cano laid a clear list of violations of the laws governing the program before the director. Goodwin, in turn, ordered BES employees in California to investigate.[26]

* Carrot growers reasserted near-total control less than a decade later through a concerted drive for mechanization. By 1960, much of the hand tying of carrots had been replaced by what a California Senate committee called "a gigantic 'packinghouse on wheels'" as carrot growers shifted to machine cello-packing in the fields, using bracero workers in the mechanical process and "without any certification or authorization either by the State Department of Employment or the United States Employment Service." Struggles over labor process are thus an engine for technical as much as social change. California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 120.

† In fact, NAWU, or Galarza personally, paid for Hernandez Cano's trip. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 211.

BES officials interviewed some 300 braceros in the Salinas area—"about a 10% sample of Mexican nationals" in the area—and on the basis of reports on 181 of these interviews tabulated weekly wages. From the way these data are reported, it is impossible to determine average wages. However, 5 of the 181 workers had lowest weekly net earnings of less than $5; the median lowest weekly earnings were likely between $30 and $35, or between $5 and $6 a day. At the other extreme, 10 workers had highest weekly net earnings of between $76 and $100 ($12.67–16.67 a day); the median high weekly net earnings were between $46 and $50 ($7.67–8.33 a day). Assuming ten-hour days and six-day work weeks, then, braceros could expect *during their best weeks* to earn between 76¢ and 85¢ an hour (after deductions); during poor weeks they could expect to earn between 50¢ and 60¢.* In the same survey, the majority of workers interviewed claimed their housing and food were "good." At the same time, investigators found that "illegal blanket deductions"—charging blanket rental—"were almost uniformly applied" and ordered refunds for these charges to affected workers. Finally, Goodwin reported, investigators found that when in Washington, Hernandez Cano had understated his earnings. In D.C., he apparently complained he had not netted more than $18 a week; payroll records showed that in fact he had averaged $37.94 per week. In other words, *on average* Hernandez Cano made something close to the median of the worst weekly earnings of the 181 braceros for whom reports were available.[27]

These data were grudgingly given to NAWU. Glenn Brockway, the regional director of the BES in San Francisco, complained that "conservatively estimated" investigation of union complaints about the treatment of braceros in the Salinas Valley (together with investigations related to Hernandez Cano's visit to Washington) took up "60 to 65 man days" and involved the "Regional Director, Regional Farm Placement Representative and his staff, including three compliance representatives, the Regional Attorney and one of his assistants." The cause of all this effort had been an October 6, 1952, letter from Galarza to Goodwin in Washington laying out a list of seventeen "injustices" in the Salinas area, to add to Hernandez Cano's complaints. They included, among other things, that on his return to Salinas, Hernandez Cano was removed from the employer to which he was assigned and not reassigned. Other complaints included lack of

* In 1951, contracted wages from the Growers Farm Labor Association in Salinas were 82.5¢, or $8.25 a day when 10 hours of work was available. Whatever the number of hours available, workers were charged $1.75 a day for board. On an hourly basis, good days in 1951 would net $6.50. Gladwin Hill, "Men Seeking U.S. Jobs Mill in Misery at Mexican Camp: Disregard of Workers' Priority for Farm Posts Stirs Violence—Many in Park Awaiting Work are Hungry and Ill," *New York Times*, April 23, 1951, 1, 26, data from 26.

medical care and abuses in the nonoccupational medical insurance program all braceros were required to join, the use of undocumented workers by employers and contractors who also used braceros—indeed two instances of braceros being assigned to contractors who as recently as the day before had undocumented workers in their employ arrested by the INS—and specific examples of underpayment and illegal record keeping. Galarza ended his letter by giving a specific example of an employer who "refused to recognize the right of Mexican nationals who are members of the Union to be represented by the Union in relation to the maintenance of the contracts."[28]

In his detailed response, Brockway denied some of the union's claims. He argued, for example, that Hernandez Cano had indeed been offered a transfer to another "member-user" of the growers association he was contracted to. Hernandez Cano refused that transfer, according to Brockway, because "he did not feel that the explanation given for refusal to return him to his original employer . . . was satisfactory." But, as Brockway reminded Galarza, by the terms of the international agreement, transfer among member-users, though refusable by braceros, did not have to be justified: the agreement and the standard work contract allowed such transfers because they were "necessary and in the interest of all concerned." On top of that, it appeared that Hernandez Cano had in fact skipped out on his contract and "was now working somewhere in the Salinas Valley, but not under contract." On another matter, Brockway wrote in response, not only was the Maggio company of the Imperial Valley now once again certified to use braceros (having lost that privilege when it was found the previous season to be using undocumented workers), but in the Salinas Valley it was not in fact employing braceros at all. Those braceros who were working in Maggio's fields in King City were in fact hired by Emil Myers, "an approved member of the Growers Farm Labor Association," who was, apparently, a subcontractor for Maggio.[29]

On other matters Brockway reported that investigation had shown the union to be correct: braceros on Saunders Farms were indeed paid a different rate and on a different basis than domestic workers; user-members had indeed been "negligent" and "careless" in obtaining medical assistance for workers injured on the job; some growers were indeed illegally charging braceros for blankets and deducting it from their paychecks, while other growers were not recording these same deductions at all; yet other growers were indeed refusing to give domestic workers identification numbers that would allow them to work in carrot fields where braceros were at work; and a number of growers did indeed *appear* to be using mixed crews of undocumented workers and braceros. In

other words, in the Salinas, abuses of the bracero program were rife, just as NAWU charged. But in each of these cases, Brockway either excused the behavior (e.g., claiming that differentials in pay between domestics and braceros were the result of a request by the braceros themselves—a claim for which he provided no evidence), or noted that the growers in question had been "warned" to desist (while accepting it at face value when growers "assured" investigators of their "future compliance" with the Migrant Labor Agreement), or said his hands were tied (as in the case of the mixed crews, where Brockway repeatedly stated BES had received no official notification of apprehension from the INS).[30]

Finally, he noted that "the question of the interpretation of Article 21 of the Migrant Labor Agreement of 1951, as amended, is now under consideration by the Solicitor's office." In its entirety, Article 21 read: "The Mexican workers shall enjoy the right to elect their own representatives who shall be recognized for the purpose of maintaining the work contract between the Mexican workers and the employer, provided that this Article shall not affect the right of the Mexican worker individually to contact his employer, the Mexican Consul, or the representative of the Secretary of Labor with respect to his employment under this work contract." Galarza was increasingly convinced that while the bracero program had to be opposed, both in general and in its particular operations, the rights of braceros themselves had to be defended, and, especially, braceros had to be brought into the union.[31]

A trip Galarza had taken to the Hermosillo contracting center in April 1951 had convinced him that the sheer desperation of many of the braceros by the time they were selected left them vulnerable to hyperexploitation.* Galarza had traveled to Hermosillo with Gladwin Hill, a reporter for the *New York Times*, and two representatives of the Imperial Central Labor Council. His trip was part of a coordinated action on the contracting procedures developed with the Alianza de Braceros and the Union de Trabajadores Agricolas in Mexicali. In Hermosillo, Galarza and Hill found 6,000 or so *aspirantes* living in the half-mile-square Parque Francisco I Madero (down from a high of 12,000 at the beginning of the month, which, based on city population and park size, Hill equated to a "protracted encampment of 2,000,000 unemployed in Central Park in New York"). Contracting—which at this time was still done directly by growers (including representatives of the Growers Farm Labor Association in

* The same was even more true for illegal entrants, as President Truman asserted when he signed PL 78 into law, but here Galarza and much of the rest of the union movement were decidedly less sympathetic, as the following chapter will make clear.

Salinas)—was moving slowly. Only 2,400 braceros had been selected since the center opened on April 2. Some 4,000 had dispersed, either to try their luck as "wetbacks" or to return to their hometowns.[32]

Conditions for the remainder were appalling. As *aspirantes* descended on Hermosillo, no provisions were made for their housing, feeding, or sanitary needs. Stands of Queen Anne's Lace in the park became their toilets; barbeque pits were dug in other flowerbeds; trees were stripped for firewood; and job seekers slept, in the thousands, "under trees on the lawn, under cement benches, in cardboard lean-tos. One even improvised a perch in a tree." Many arrived in the city broke and hungry, and they remained hungry until the Sonoran government established a massive soup kitchen that served one free meal a day to four thousand supplicants at its peak. Before the state set up its soup kitchen and an associated medical clinic that treated up to three hundred workers each day, there was talk of malnutrition, "numerous workers [had] contracted pneumonia and several have died," and, according to both Hill and Galarza, the communist-affiliated Partito Popular was making inroads.[33]

Aspirantes were certainly restive. Many had arrived carrying *permissos* and *recomendados* from local politicians, but their value was questionable at best, given how few orders for workers there were. Each day thousands of job seekers were herded into a baseball stadium next to the park, organized into something like battalions, and left there to wait in the sun with the hope of being called forward—perhaps three hundred one day or seventy-five the next—before being sent back to their blankets and rude shelters when the day's recruiting was over. The inevitable result was "repeated small riots," in one of which (on April 5) a worker was trampled to death, and on all of which order was restored with rifle butts by otherwise sympathetic police. Hill and Galarza witnessed one such riot on their visit to Hermosillo, even as the Mexican press reported on a larger riot of six thousand *aspirantes* in Monterrey. In response to the unrest, the Mexican government ordered the national railway to refuse to sell tickets to migrant workers traveling north, and announced punishments for local officials and agents collecting commissions and *mordida*.[34]

Galarza reported that those selected for an interview "openly said they were being processed like cattle." As they entered the interview room, "the contractor extends him a hearty handshake, usually placing his free hand on the applicant's shoulder in faint suggestion of the traditional Mexican 'abrazo.'" But "the object of the once over, the handshake and the shoulder pat is to determine the applicant's weight, tensile strength, muscular coordination, stoop labor re-

flexes, degree of sophistication and tractability. This is the first and crucial test of processing." Those who did not make it—"old men, amputees, alcoholics, fags, ragged dudes, known union members, alert former contractees and obvious softies"—were sent away. Ones who did pass the test were fingerprinted, photographed, given a quick medical exam, ushered into another room where "he signs a contract he has never read, agrees to wages that have never been discussed with him." He was then loaded onto an American bus, which, with few stops and only one chance for a meal, took him as far as a thousand miles away for work. After PL 78 and the international agreement of 1951 went into effect, the Hermosillo center was closed and a new one opened in Empalme, but conditions hardly improved (as we have already seen): living (and protesting) in public parks remained the norm; the lack of food common; the *mordida* standard; and the humiliating interview process required.[35]

The results of this system were predictable: the creation of an often docile and grateful labor force. It is little wonder that of 154 workers interviewed by the USDL in September and October 1952, who described their living conditions, 76 percent would say that they were good and only 12 percent would say they were fair or bad. Given their living conditions in Hermosillo or Empalme, conditions in Salinas *would* seem "good" to most anyone. Similarly, it is hardly surprising that even though the quantity and quality of the food provided was a constant sore point among braceros, of 164 who commented, 70 percent would claim the food they were served was "good," 20 percent "fair," and only 10 percent "bad." More than docile and grateful, though, this workforce was, a few workers like Hernandez Cano notwithstanding, largely tractable. They were on the whole unwilling to lodge complaints (even if the process for doing so hadn't been so cumbersome).[36]

Indeed, that fact makes Hernandez Cano's trip to Washington even more remarkable (even if, or simply because, the union was behind it). It is some indication that, whatever the braceros may have told USDL officials, there was a remarkable undercurrent of dissatisfaction in the Valley. It was essential, Galarza felt, to tap this undercurrent. Not only would doing so abet the union in its goals of radically transforming or even eliminating the bracero program, not only would doing so bring more workers into the union itself, but doing so was essential if wages, work conditions, and living standards of domestic workers were not going to be eroded even further. The burgeoning controversy over carrot tying made it clear that with tractable bracero labor—labor that no matter how discontented remained mostly powerless to make demands—growers would not only be able to erode the wage position of workers, they would also

be able to shunt more of their own operating costs (even the cost of advertising!) onto the workers themselves.*

Starting with the 1951 Imperial Valley strike, the NFLU (as it was then) began signing up braceros on the theory that "requests for help in processing . . . grievances" met the language of Article 21 of the Migrant Labor Agreement allowing braceros to elect their own representatives: their very presence at the union hall constituted their "election" of the union as their representative. Union strategy with regard to braceros was an evolving project, however, and far from consistent. Preparing for the spring 1952 harvest in the Imperial—where dismissals of domestic workers in favor of Nationals was picking up speed, and where "the boys are panting—and mad"—Galarza swithered between trying to "make inroads with our propaganda" among "the old Nationals [who] are sore over wages and non compliance," and promising that "if we strike . . . we will stop any Nationals from going through the lines if we have to beat the hell out of them."† One reason for this latter promise was that the union was convinced that incoming Nationals were "indoctrinated against cooperating with the American Federation of Labor specifically and trade unionism in general."[37]

By exposing the use of mixed (bracero and "wetback") crews on a number of farms—Maggio, Arena, American, and others—by threatening legal action against the USDL, the California Department of Employment, and its representatives, and by securing the help of labor-friendly U.S. Representative John F. (Jack) Shelley to pressure Labor Secretary Tobin into releasing the names of specific growers in the Imperial certified to use braceros, the union was able in early 1952 to get the USDL to remove National crews on a number of farms in the Valley and replace them with domestic workers. The union was especially effective on the Maggio farm, which was banned—they thought at this time forever—from receiving braceros and which was now cooperating with the union, even if it did not formally recognize it. Galarza reported that a larger number of domestic workers than in 1951 were convinced they had to stay in

* Galarza's motives were both cynical (he argued for braceros to be admitted into the union in not insignificant part because they "could provide valuable information otherwise unavailable to us") and strategic ("I stressed that the effect of the bracero program was to split workers into hostile camps, just as the wetbacks were pitted against both braceros and local"). Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 177.

† Galarza reported that enrolling braceros in the union met with "some opposition [from braceros] at first, primarily because it appeared to contradict the position of the union on the bracero system." Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 177. Galarza oversaw operations in the Imperial on his own. Hasiwar had been reassigned to Louisiana to organize sugar cane workers; ibid., 175.

the Valley and fight. Braceros were literally caught between, and were pawns in, a protean struggle between capital and labor over which they had very little say, and very little power to affect.[38]

If swithering union policy toward braceros induced some amount of chariness on their part to join the union, this was compounded by the fact braceros deeply felt the "dull compulsion of economic relations" in all its powerful manifestations, from long before they decided to make the journey to the contracting stations to the everyday vagaries of the work process once they were assigned to a growers association or corporate employer, and thus the "price" of cooperation was exceedingly high.* Braceros, in other words, had to be won over, if the union was going to be able to turn them into allies. A road in that direction seemed to be opening by what was perceived, by domestic and bracero workers alike, as a growing incidence of injury and accident both directly on the farm and in transportation to and from it (see chapter 11). Trucks used by contractors and growers to transport workers were notoriously unsafe. As union agitation was building in the Imperial in 1952, three farm workers were killed (and numerous others injured) in three weeks in accidents involving farm worker transport trucks. Galarza quickly found that focusing on workplace and transportation accidents was one place where the union could "make headway with the Mexican Nationals." In part this was because, whatever the provisions of the international agreement and the standard work contract (both of which required growers to pay for occupational health insurance and to provide nonoccupational insurance at workers' expense), "*braceros* are often denied the medical care to which they are entitled and for which they have paid," as Galarza later put it. NAWU began documenting abuses of both the occupational and nonoccupational insurance programs,† such as charging workers for a full month's insurance when their contracts started mid-month, charging workers for drugs already covered under the insurance, and refusing to allow doctors into camps, or otherwise denying medical treatment.[39]

As braceros increasingly dominated the labor pools in both the Imperial and

* There was much to worry about: it was not uncommon for workers who affiliated in any way with the union to have their contracts summarily cancelled. For one example, see Ernesto to Mitch, June 26, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6.

† Lack of access to guaranteed medical care, together with a great deal of "skimming" of bracero premiums that went on by approved insurance companies, was a constant problem. It was the proximate cause for the Imperial Valley activist Dr. Ben Yellen, whom we will meet in chapter 11, to get involved in contesting the working of the program, and it was the special interest of Henry Anderson in the studies that got him fired from the University of California (also chapter 11).

the Salinas valleys, as lettuce packing moved into the fields to be done largely by Mexican National workers at the expense of domestic men and women, as growers deployed bracero labor in their drive to shift the costs of production in the carrot harvest to workers, NAWU, suffering from restricted finances and a lack of support from the AFL, slowly withdrew from active organizing. The union hierarchy, which by 1954 in California was Ernesto Galarza alone, increasingly focused NAWU's efforts on bracero grievances.* Galarza documented innumerable abuses, often with the pro bono assistance of James E. Murray, an attorney who had volunteered his services in the midst of the carrot-tying controversy.

But growers had a simple means of avoiding any culpability for their abuses of bracero workers. Workers who caused trouble—complained, filed an insurance claim, or sought the assistance of the Mexican consul or NAWU, for example—saw their contracts either cancelled outright or not renewed at the end of their contract period. Writing on behalf of the California Council of Agricultural Unions (a NAWU front organization), for example, William Becker circulated in May 1953 details of "three Mexican contract nationals employed through the Imperial Valley Farmers Association in the D'Arrigo Co. fields [who] were suddenly deported to Mexico, without even a chance to get their clothes or belongings, and before the expiration of their contract." Two of the workers had earlier been injured when the D'Arrigo truck they were traveling in crashed. When their insurance claims were slow to be processed, they asked for assistance from NAWU. The third worker had telegrammed "the Mexican government asking for assistance on their compensation claims." According to the union, this action led the USES compliance officer in the Imperial Valley to order their deportation, telling the workers that their action—seeking union help and wiring the Mexican government—was "a mistake" and "not appreciated." The officer also told the union it had no right to represent the departed workers, even as Galarza reported that "we now have four and may soon have

* The reasons for this withdrawal were many, and some hints for them are given in Watson, "Mixed Melody," and Pitti, "Ernesto Galarza." Galarza provides his own explanations in *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 195–202, 352–61, and *Spiders in the House*, 80–88. Hasiwar left for Louisiana in early 1952; soon thereafter, William Swearingen, one of the most effective organizers of the DiGiorgio strikes, was red-baited out of the union. Soon NAWU was no longer able to support William Becker or Hughe Williams, who together had kept vibrant a local in Porterville in the heart of the eastern citrus belt. With some assistance from volunteer or sometimes paid organizers (like Dewitt Tannehill in Yuba City), the administration of the union in California became Galarza himself, who was not an organizer, but "Director of Research and Education."

twelve Nationals on our hands with the same problems." The deportation posed a particular problem for the union, since in order to fight for workers' claims, it needed to find ways to keep the workers in the area, even if on the other side of the Mexican border, and thus had to find ways to pay for food and lodging for them (since they were no longer working).[40]

When attorney Jim Murray forcefully complained to the BES in San Francisco about the USES officers' comments, the BES declared that indeed Galarza could be involved in the defense of the braceros' rights (he could not be barred from the proceedings as the USES officer had wanted), but *not* as a representative of the workers, only as an "interpreter" for them. At the same time the agency declared that the burden of proof rested with the workers—they had to prove they were wrongfully discharged and deported—not with the employer or the IVFA. And soon, following a brief investigation, the BES held that, with the exception of a "technical error" by the USES compliance officer that left one worker underpaid by sixty dollars, that same officer's perhaps "too great haste in effecting the repatriation of the three workers," and an illegal board deduction of thirteen dollars, neither the USES, the BES, nor the IVFA had done anything wrong in the deportation of the workers. If the workers had not been properly compensated for their injuries, that was because the California Industrial Accident Commission had not received official claims from the workers (an organization and a procedure nowhere specified in the governing documents of the program). If the workers complained of antiunion discrimination, such complaints could not be sustained because the compliance officer denied having any antiunion sentiment (a denial sustained, in the eyes of the BES, by statements by three employees of the IVFA) and because there were no provisions in the international agreement or work contract preventing antiunion discrimination (only discrimination on the basis of race and national origin). And if the workers had been deprived of their belongings when they were deported, it was only because the "lateness of the hour" (5:00 p.m.) prevented the BES officials from collecting their luggage at their camp and providing it to them at the border.[41]

In its report on its investigation, the BES claimed the union's complaint that Article 25 of the Migrant Labor Agreement was violated in the deportations was not sustained because the IVFA never invoked that article. (Article 25 governed the dismissal for reasons "beyond the growers' control," what Glenn Brockway called "acts of God.") But as the union noted, in dismissing this portion of the complaint, the BES never determined just what provision the workers were fired and deported under. The assumption by BES was that it was because of lack of available work, but as the union pointed out, the IVFA was simultaneously deploying other workers *and* receiving fresh consignments of contract Nation-

als. Whatever NAWU's objections, however, this investigation set the pattern for nearly all the investigations conducted in the remainder of the program. Whenever workers or unions complained of maltreatment, an internal investigation, based in very narrow grounds, sided with the growers associations, only occasionally lightly slapping a wrist and eliciting a promise to do better in the future. And in the wake of this investigation, the union harbored little doubt that growers maintained a blacklist, overseen by associations like the IVFA, of braceros not to be hired—just as they did for domestics—and in which USDL willfully colluded.[42]

The union complained that one of the curiosities of the contract labor program was that it allowed, in cases like this, for the USDL (and especially the BES) to serve as "violator, investigator, and judge of its own case." And sometimes, in fact, its role in each of these areas was nothing short of idiosyncratic. When, the union charged, a domestic worker in Salinas, David Bustamante, was fired by the contractor for whom he worked to make room for a bracero, Galarza was unable to press the issue with the area compliance officer "because he was going on a hunting trip." The case was placed in abeyance.[43]

Representation and the Labor Process

Bustamante was an eighteen-year-old farm worker who lived with his family in a home in a camp operated by the Englund and Russel companies. He had been working for the past two years in the carrot harvest as a loader. The contractor for whom he worked, Joe Aspacio, increased Bustamante's duties in this position, adding a set of new tasks with no increase in pay. When Bustamante asked for a raise, he was eventually given one, then quickly fired, with Aspacio giving the reason that he could get Mexican Nationals to do the same, expanded, work for less. Bustamante and his family subleased their home in the camp from Aspacio. When he fired Bustamante, Aspacio also tried to evict them to make way for the braceros who would be taking Bustamante's (and others') job. When the family refused to vacate, Aspacio obtained a court order against them. It was when Galarza appealed this firing and ordered eviction to the BES compliance officer that he learned nothing could be done for the family since the officer was leaving immediately to go hunting. As it had with the braceros suspiciously deported from the Imperial Valley, NAWU, and lawyer Jim Murray in particular, sought to defend the interests of the Bustamante family in whatever venue they could find. Murray provided advice on if and how to contest the eviction notice, and in particular wore down the resistance of the management of the Monterey County Housing Authority's labor camp to providing space for the family.

Murray reported that the leasing officer for the Authority balked at admitting the family because he did not like David Bustamante's mother's "attitude." According to Murray, the officer claimed Mrs. Bustamante wanted "Waldorf-Astoria accommodation," but when pressed for specifics to substantiate the charge, the officer "said he could not" provide any "and apologized." After Murray's intervention, the Bustamante family (David, his mother, and "several brothers and sisters") was given a small cement-floored apartment. Murray donated a rug so that the cold floors did not exacerbate Mrs. Bustamante's rheumatism.[44]

This may seem a small event, but it was one of dozens like it the union brought to light, each of which was indicative of the way the bracero program could be used as a wedge to pry open the labor process and remake it as something even more advantageous to capital. It also shed light on how the landscape—especially the landscape of camps—operated in this process to undermine the power of workers to determine their own future, without the constant intervention of energetic, but also overworked, representatives like Galarza and Murray. The steady decline of NAWU as an organizing force in California thus threatened even tighter grower control over the labor process and the labor landscape—and thus laborers' lives—making even more one-sided what was already a highly one-sided struggle over the conditions of agricultural work in the state.

Yet even with growing levels of control over the labor process, labor power, and labor landscapes capital was gaining through the everyday and bureaucratic operations of the bracero program, growers were not fully satisfied. For one thing, there seemed to be a growing threat they might lose ready access to the large supply of undocumented workers that had always been such an important adjunct of the bracero program. As the following chapter will show, agitation against "wetbacks" was growing, and those agitating against their presence ran the gamut from NAWU and various other labor-oriented groups and unions to the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce (Murray noted, in closing out his report on the Bustamante family, that the Chamber would be meeting imminently to develop "a new system . . . by which to get Nationals into the country legally").[45]

Growers wanted even more. Meeting in November 1953, in Los Angeles, and worried California agriculture was overly reliant on Mexico, which had shown itself sometimes unreliable in meeting California growers' demands, citrus growers "agreed that all possible sources of supply should be given consideration, including Jamaicans from the British West Indies, Puerto Ricans, Japanese, Filipinos, and possibly certain areas of South America." According to the *News Letter* of the Agricultural Producers Labor Committee, "the group felt

that as long as Mexico believed she held all of the cards and that California agriculture had no other source of labor supply than Mexico, the program would continue to be subject to delay and exorbitant demands—and the sooner an alternative source were to be established, the better off we would be." (Earlier in the year, according to Congressman Jack Shelley, the CFBF and Associated Farmers had sought State Department approval to import war-displaced South Korean peasants, showing again the distance growers were willing to go to assure a pliant labor supply.)[46]

Labor economist Lloyd Fisher could easily have been writing about David Bustamante and his fellow workers in the Salinas Valley as they contended with transformations in the lettuce and carrot harvest labor process, the expropriation of housing for single-male Mexican National contract workers, and the perhaps spotty (if still welcome) interventions of the NAWU, when he concluded his 1953 study of *The Harvest Labor Market in California* as follows:

> The case of the casual agricultural worker was different [from that of the farmer]. His poverty was chronic. There were no years for recouping. To be sure, a substantial increase in the price of farm commodities was likely to be reflected in an increase in the wages paid to harvest hands, but the improvement by most standards was small. If employment for six or seven months a year was the most that might be hoped for, no conceivable improvement of wage scales could carry so large a burden of unemployment. Further, the migratory worker was in no position to demand his share of the gains to the agricultural employer. He would receive no more than he could effectively demand and he could enforce few of his demands. The market in which he offered his labor was casual and unskilled, always threatened by the large supplies of labor in Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Bahamas. Efforts at trade union organization had been conspicuously unsuccessful.
>
> The government was no reliable ally either, for the migrant agricultural worker could muster no political force. . . . Such programs affecting the welfare of casual agricultural workers as remain have now devolved in law or in fact into the hands of decentralized agencies whose effective clientele is the farm employer and not the casual worker.[47]

Such was the case with the USDL with its BES and USES. Such was also the case with the California departments concerned with agricultural issues as the Warren administration gave way in the last quarter of 1953 to the rather complacent Knight administration that was to follow.

And such was the case with the INS, even though it was about to embark on its biggest-ever roundup of undocumented workers with its much heralded Operation Wetback.

Wetback

Surplus Labor

"RACE," AS STUART HALL SO PERSUASIVELY ARGUED, "is the modality in which class is lived." So is citizenship. As geographers Geoff Mann and Ruth Wilson Gilmore variously argue, it is not the *intersection* of these modalities that matters but (in Gilmore's apt term) their *fatal coupling*. For Gilmore, racism is (in a phrase that makes plain its structurally violent constitution) "the state-sanctioned or extra-legal production and exploitation of group differentiated vulnerability to premature death." Rac*ism* is thus what structures the modality of class in America—California in particular. And as Mann makes so clear in his historical geography of California wage labor, that rac*ism* must always be understood as internally related to gender, citizenship, and more. As he puts it, "Stuart Hall is right (I am tempted to say 'as usual'): 'race is the modality in which class is lived' hits the nail on the head—just not hard enough." The fatal coupling of race, class, gender, citizenship, work, life, and death is not accidental, and while these couplings always exceed or contradict any sort of easy social, political, or economic functionality, it is vital to understand how the *way* they couple up can be, and is, put to *use*. In capitalism, and especially in California capitalism, fatal couplings are, Gilmore shows, a means of managing surpluses—surpluses of capital and land, but especially of labor.[1]

Managing surplus labor—rather than managing the labor shortage growers always said was looming—has been a defining problem of the California agricultural landscape. There has *always* been a labor surplus (there has to be) and how it is "coupled up"—how the specific modalities of race, class, gender, citizenship, and so forth, are structured—has been a vital problem not only for growers, but also for the state (at all scales from the federal, right down to the most local). It's an ugly history. No less an icon of white, American California than John Sutter "consolidated his control over Indian field hands by demonstrating just how casually he apprehended and jailed runaways, and how easily he disciplined, banished, and even executed malcontents. Some of Sutter's acts were hideous," reports historian Richard Steven Street. "During the summer of 1845, for example, natives were terrified by the macabre sight of the severed head of [Miwok headman] Maximo's son, Raphero, rotting over the fort gateway, a sickening and unavoidable symbol of the penalty for inciting rebellion.

Indians were constantly subject to such terror; the following summer, they were forced to pass under the remains of a Miwok brave named Eusevio. Arriving at Sutter's Fort, Heinrich Leinhard [Sutter's overseer] later recalled seeing 'a gruesome site . . . the long black hair and skull of an Indian dangling by one of the gateposts.'" As Tomás Almaguer details so thoroughly, such brutality was founded on an assessment of Native Californians as not only uncivilized but uncivilizable—a race apart. On this basis California's white population abrogated to itself "the most barbaric claim one person can hold over another: the right to murder with impunity." When not hunted down and murdered, Native Californians were "indentured"—enslaved, really—through both an 1850 law that placed ten thousand Indians directly into "apprenticeships" to California land owners (from which they could not exit), and a law that same year that allowed Indians detained for vagrancy to be sold to any individual willing to pay their fines.[2]

Early California growers knew, however, that it was foolish to pin their reserve-army hopes on a race marked for genocide, and thus set their sights on China and the swelling ranks of Chinese immigrants induced into the state by the Gold Rush and railroad construction. As racist attacks in the city drove Chinese workers into the countryside, growers received them with open arms. According to a representative of the California Fruit Growers Association around 1900, Chinese were perfect farm labor because they were perfectly "adapted to that particular form of labor to which so many white men object. They are patient, plodding and uncomplaining in the performance of the most menial service"—a description that would later happily be applied to Japanese, Filipinos, and Mexicans. Other growers marveled at how Chinese workers could survive on the most minimal of wages and how their short stature "consigned [them] to the farm work force by a mechanism of natural selection." Yet the racist struggles that pushed them into the open arms of the waiting farmers knew few bounds and urban agitation soon enough led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that began to dry up this seemingly infinite labor supply with few other options but to toil in the fields for others.[3]

At first growers thought Japanese workers might prove an adequate substitute, but they soon proved themselves, in the eyes of the employers, to be untrustworthy. Rather than preying on their work gangs, Japanese foremen worked with them, frequently leading them to strike at critical times during harvests. Proving it was not just *any* labor that growers wanted, but labor that had to behave in certain ways, it was growers who this time led the agitation for exclusion, a campaign that led to the 1908 "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the emperor of Japan, which barred Japanese immigration into the United

States. The same campaign culminated in California in the 1913 Alien Land Law, which barred immigrants who were "ineligible for citizenship"—primarily "Mongolians, Chinese, and Japanese" (though as we have seen eventually also "Hindus")—from owning land and which, despite such tactics as assigning land deeds to their citizen children or a white front-man, led to a not-inconsequential degree of dispossession.[4]

Between 1913 and 1942, it is important to remember, "white"—that is, European—workers never comprised less than 45 percent of the population of farm labor camps in California. Yet with restrictions on European immigration in the 1920s and with the exclusion of Asians, the value of Mexican workers became clear. Dr. Charles Bennett, manager of the progressive San Dimas Colony citrus farm, stated the value of Mexican workers baldly: "The recently arrived Mexican peon is in a certain stage of savagery and can be treated accordingly." He was "an empiric agriculturalist, barely emerged from a barbaric past and with little recorded progress. Yet he has natural tendencies that stamp him as a likeable human. His very lack of sophistication is an advantage."[5]

There is no rule that says ideology must match reality. As Mexican workers grew militant at the end of the 1920s, their actions were met with a ferocious level of violence from growers and their allies—the sort of violence Carey McWilliams described so vividly—as well as a concerted program of deportation, a deportation made possible by the fortuitous arrival of tens, and eventually hundreds of thousands, of Dust Bowl refugees, desperate for any sort of work. The problem with the white workers arriving from the East, as we saw in chapter 2, was that "being American citizens, they are going to demand so-called American standards of living." What was needed was a racialized labor source that was also a noncitizen one. (Indeed, for a while growers thought the Philippines might be a good place to look for a mass of racially fit workers, but because the Philippines was an American colony, Filipinos were entitled, more or less, to the rights of other American citizens—they couldn't be deported, for example. California growers were thus at the forefront of American efforts for Filipino independence.) Enter the bracero.[6]

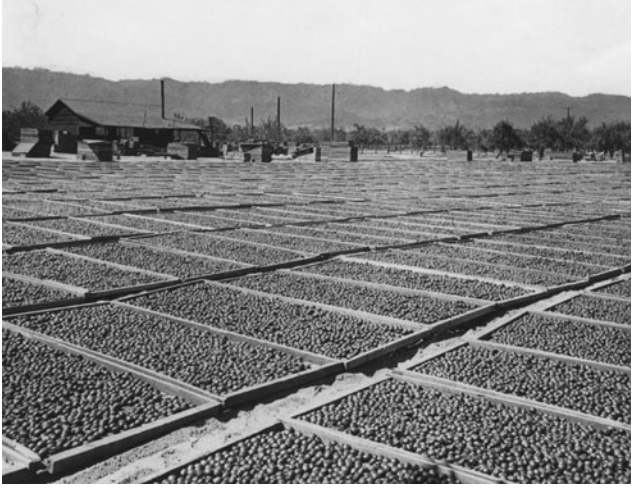
Enter also the "wetback." Historian Alexander Sexton called the Chinese in nineteenth-century California "the indispensable enemy." The great thing about undocumented Mexican workers was precisely that they *were* dispensable—*deportable*—precisely because of the fatal coupling of race, citizenship, and class. "Wetbacks" were despised, from all sides, even as their labor power was a great boon, often to growers. Mexico provided an adjacent, yet separated and colonized, space for the reserve army to be housed, drawn on, and returned as economically or politically necessary. If it could not be tapped entirely at will, it

was not far from that. If political exigencies required workers' return to Mexico, growers knew this was an expedient that had the added effect of building up demand for work, or seen from the other side, restocking the reserve army, while also decreasing the direct costs of reproduction on *this* side of the border. The dynamic was summed up perfectly by Willard F. Kelly, assistant commissioner of the Border Patrol in 1954: "During the war it became necessary, because of manpower shortages, to import several hundred thousand workers for railroads and agriculture. Reports sent home by those who came about life in the United States gradually turned the trickle [of 'wetbacks'] into a flood. Today it is the greatest peacetime invasion ever complacently suffered by one country under open, flagrant, contemptuous violation of its laws." Mexico, in other words, had better once again take on its responsibility of being the *land* where America's working class was reproduced, and no longer shunt that duty north. Reinforcing the border, reinforcing the rights and privileges of citizenship (while assuring domestic workers were nonetheless pushed out of the labor market), reset the scales of uneven development.[7]

Operation Wetback, as the 1954 drive against undocumented workers was called, together with its obverse—the benign neglect of the border, when conditions suited—was precisely a means of *managing* surplus, of organizing the fatal coupling of race, class, gender, and citizenship such that it became and remained economically and politically *productive*. Operation Wetback had the "effect of buttressing and entrenching a system of contract labor that was uniquely suited to agricultural production," in Kitty Calavita's estimation. Immigration enforcement more generally was thus the carburetor that regulated the mix of oxygen and fuel in the engine of accumulation. Operation Wetback was geared toward *preserving* California's landscape of capitalist agriculture, not transforming it.[8]



The scale of agriculture in California just before World War II: the carrot harvest in the Imperial Valley, 1939. Note the small child workers in the foreground to the right. This is the sort of large-scale agriculture Carey McWilliams thought was on the cusp of radical change as the United States entered the war and before braceros were imported. Photograph by Dorothea Lange. Credit: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-DIG-fsa-8b33207 DLC.



Agriculture, California-style, at the outbreak of World War II. Pictured is a massive prune-drying yard in Santa Clara County. The sheer sense of risk involved in mass agricultural production is here obviously apparent. Photographer unknown. Courtesy, History San José.



Aspirantes line up in front of the Secretariat of Labor in Mexico City as word of the Mexican National labor program leaked out. Photograph by the Hermanos Mayo. Credit: Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Hermanos Mayo.



Aspirantes gather in front of the National Stadium in Mexico City hoping to be selected for the 1943 season. Photograph by the Hermanos Mayo. Credit: Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Hermanos Mayo.



Aspirantes being dispersed by firehoses during a protest near the National Stadium, Mexico City, 1943. Photograph by the Hermanos Mayo. Credit: Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Hermanos Mayo.

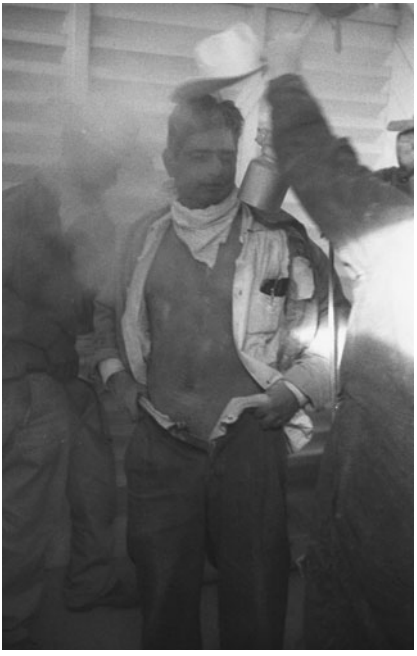


Aspirantes being processed in the National Stadium, Mexico City, 1943. Photograph by the Hermanos Mayo. Credit: Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo Hermanos Mayo.



Prospective braceros being given a medical exam in the National Stadium, Mexico City, ca. 1943. Photograph by Hilda Mayer. Source: FSA.

A bracero being fumigated in 1958. Photograph by Earl Thiesen for the *Look Magazine* article, "A New Deal for the Mexican Worker." Credit: *Look Magazine* Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-L9-58-4316-X, #19. © Roxann Livingston, used by permission.





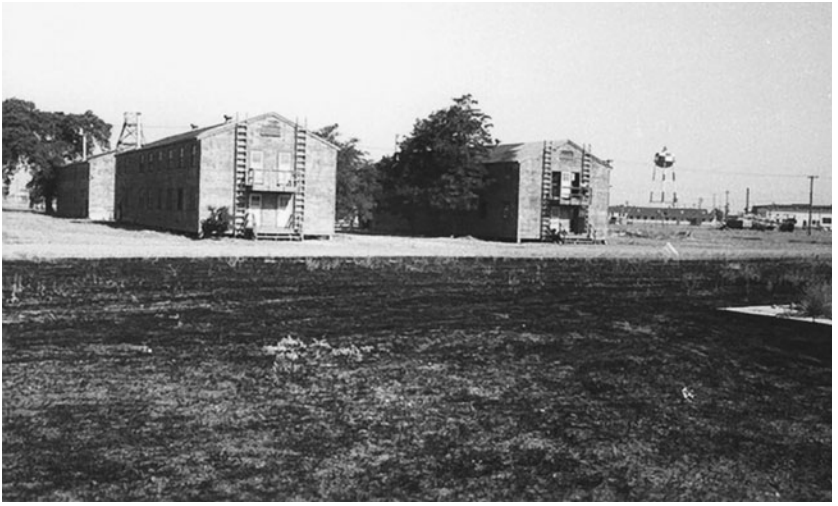
The first braceros disembark their train in Stockton, California, September 1942. Photograph by Dorothea Lange. Credit: Oakland Museum of California History, Dorothea Lange Collection.



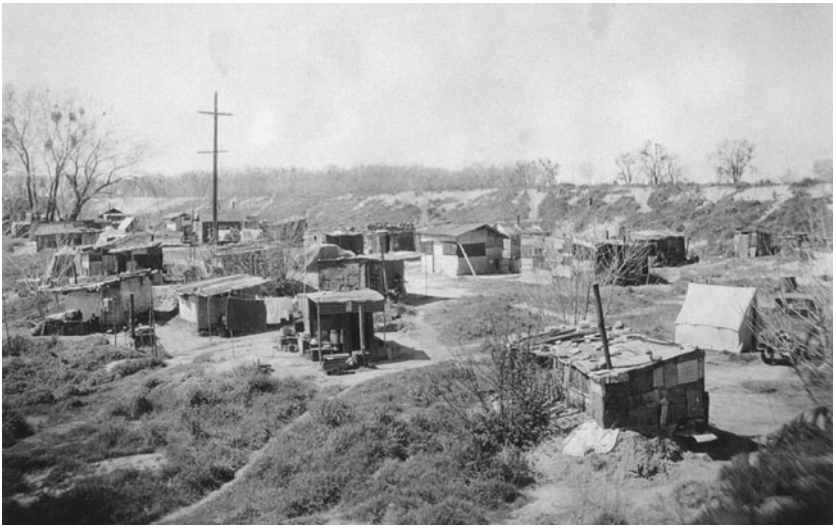
Some of the earliest braceros reaching the end of a row as they top beets in May 1943. Photograph by Marjory Collins. Credit: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USW3-026247-DLC.



Housing for braceros in the poultry pavilion at the San Joaquin County fairgrounds. Originally commandeered by the FPC in 1943 to house early braceros, it was still in use when this photograph was taken in 1951. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



Former army barracks used to house 350 braceros in 1956. When Ernesto Galarza visited the same camp in 1951, he noted that the only camp management was provided by a fence around the compound and signs reading, "Military Reservation, No Trespassing, Violators Will Be Prosecuted." It is likely that the FPC had a role in making these barracks available to bracero users. Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Work & Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.



A Hooverville housing migrant farm workers (probably white), ca. 1935. The FSA labor camps were created originally to supplant conditions like these. Photograph attributed to Harry Drobish. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



View of the Yuba City FSA camp around the start of World War II. The buildings in the foreground are apartment houses, in the center is the administrative compound and community center, and in the background are "neighborhoods" of tent platforms. A great improvement in the living conditions for many migratory workers, by the end of the 1950s, this camp, like many of the former FSA camps now operated by local PHAs, was in terrible condition and often unsafe to its residents. Photographer unknown. Credit: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-112987.



Prefabricated steel dwellings like these created for the Farmersville (Tulare) FSA camp in 1939 deteriorated rapidly after FSA/WFA camps were transferred out of the federal government. At the end of the bracero program in 1965, these shacks became a center of farm worker organizing that became one of the tributary streams creating the UFW. Photograph by Dorothea Lange. Credit: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USF34-018917-E.



Photographer Leonard Nadel captioned this photograph, "An official distributes paychecks to braceros near the Horseshoe Club in Stockton, California." Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.



An excellent mess hall for braceros in California (probably Salinas Valley), 1956. The quality and quantity of food, as well as profiteering in the preparation of it, was a longstanding sore spot in the program—though, as this photograph shows, conditions could also be quite good. Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.



Originally captioned, "Braceros sit on beds in a living quarter of a Californian camp and talk, smoke, listen to a radio program and eat strawberries," this picture gives a good sense of standard, good labor camp conditions for braceros. Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.

Below: Braceros examine a notice board listing grower and association labor needs in the San Joaquin County FPC growers' office in Stockton, 1956. Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.



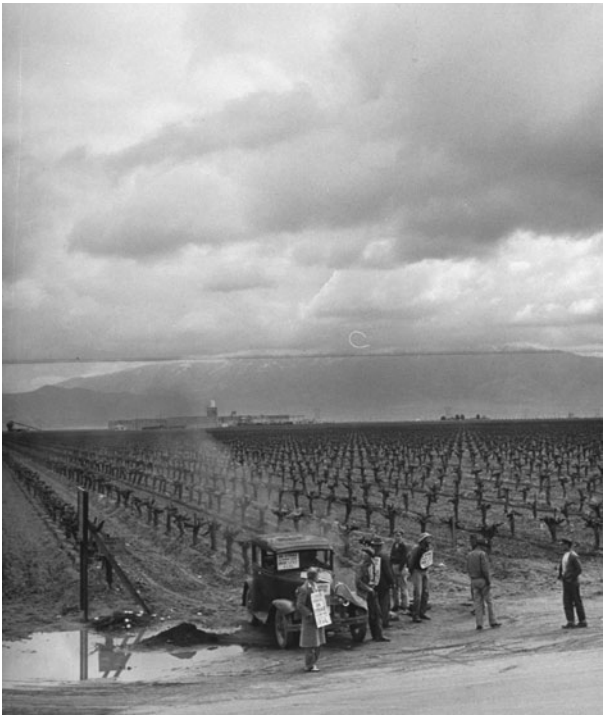
In an exposé called "The Nomads of California" published in 1956, *Look Magazine* captioned this photo of a white domestic family, "Mother goes back to work. It's tomatoes in February, then peas, carrots, lettuce, potatoes, fruit and cotton—to earn enough for the family's groceries." Photo by Earl Thiesen. Credit: *Look Magazine* Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-L9-56-4157-P#19, #19. © Roxann Livingston, used by permission.



Below: A shacktown near DiGiorgio Farms, typical of farm worker housing up and down the state in the postwar period. Housing like this was at the center of the controversy surrounding the film *Poverty in the Valley of Plenty*. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.







Above: An early NFLU meeting, probably at the time of the DiGiorgio strike. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.

At left: NFLU pickets at DiGiorgio Farms, March 1948. Photograph by Nat Farbman, Time Life Images/Getty Pictures. Used by permission.



Evicted DiGiorgio strikers. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



Strikers' caravan during the DiGiorgio strike. Car pickets like these were a standard practice in NFLU and other farm worker strikes and were the frequent target of "emergency ordinances" restricting the rights of workers to parade. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



Violence is rarely absent in California farm labor disputes. Someone tried to assassinate DiGiorgio strike leader Jimmy Price on May 17, 1948. Joseph DiGiorgio's nephew and business heir, Robert, later claimed Price's wounds were self-inflicted, a risible claim. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



Some of the displaced, Bakersfield, 1950. Photographer Louis Reens captioned the picture: "Family of 14—man, wife, 12 children—forced to move north from Imperial Valley because of wage cut. Father was earning 60 cents an hour as irrigator. Cut to 50 and quit." Photograph by Louis Reens. Credit: National Consumers League Records, 1882–1994, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Lot 13307 (H), no. 22. Courtesy, National Consumers League.



The FPS office in downtown Stockton, March 1959. Photographer Harvey Richards captioned this picture "A hated corner . . . run by the State Employment Office . . . insensitive." Photograph by Harvey Richards. Credit: Harvey Richards Media Archive, www.estuarypress.com.



A bracero lugs a box of canning tomatoes, at the time of the NFLU's tomato strike of 1951. Source: *California Annual Farm Labor Report*, 1951.



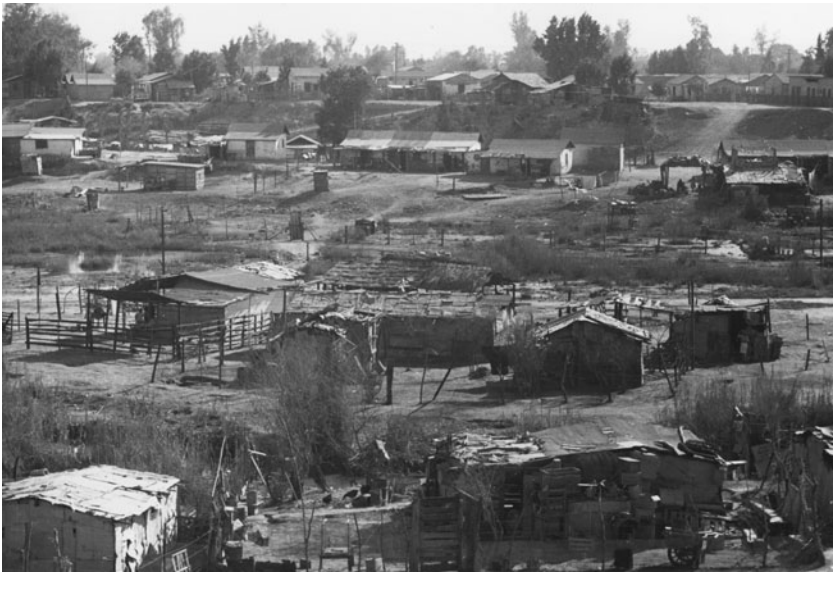
A bracero carrot tier at work in March 1944. Note the bundle of long and short twistems, which would later become a point of keen controversy in the bracero program. Photographer unknown. Source: Records of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1900–1959, RG-16-G-Box 159 (Farm Labor—Migratory), 16-G-384-1-AAA-2079.



A "monster" lettuce machine at work in the Salinas Valley, 1956. Workers walk in front cutting lettuce, which is passed up to the packers on the machine. When boxes are full, they are loaded on accompanying truck (just visible beyond the machine). Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.



Another view of the mechanized lettuce harvest, Salinas Valley, 1956. Field packing and quick trucking to vacuum cooling plants led to the elimination of unionized packing shed work, largely done by women, and expanded the role of braceros in the California landscape. Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.



A shacktown on the Mexican side of the border in Mexicali, 1950; by 1954, the *New York Times* and others had taken to calling these "Wetback Villages." Photograph by Louis Reens. Credit: National Consumers League Records, 1882–1994, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Lot 13307 (H), no. 21. Courtesy, National Consumers League.





Above: The famous January 26, 1954, *Los Angeles Times* photograph of Mexican and U.S. border guards tugging at a worker as he puts a foot across the border into Mexico—part of the process of "drying out the 'wets'" the U.S. Border Patrol encouraged in January 1954—provoking an international crisis. Photograph by *Los Angeles Times*. Credit: Los Angeles Times Photographic Archive, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

An *aspirante* is crushed in the midst of the border riots that erupted when the United States sought to unilaterally open the border in early 1954. Photograph by the *Los Angeles Times*. Credit: Los Angeles Times Photographic Archive, Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.



Aspirantes hoping to be called for processing, probably in Guanajuato, ca. 1951. Almost ten years after the bracero program began the crowds of hopeful job seekers had hardly lessened. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



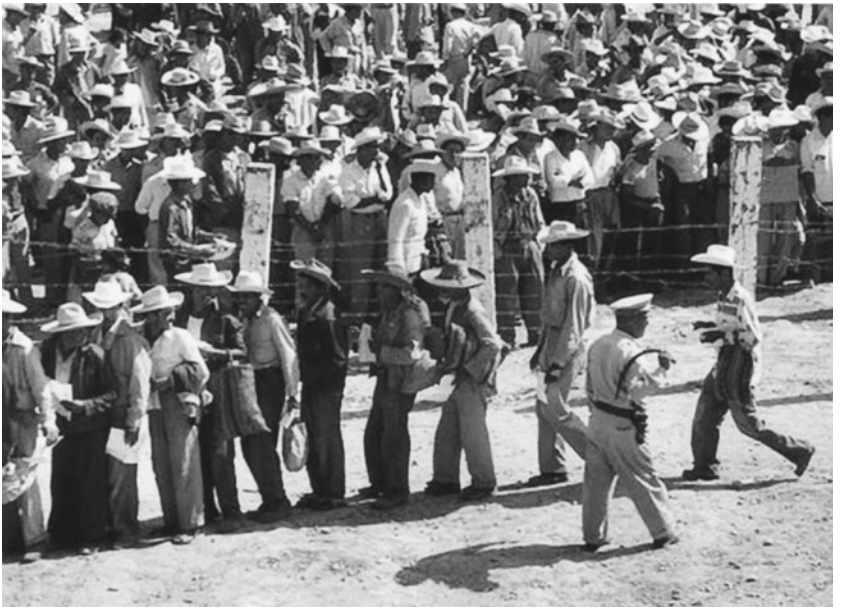
Aspirantes wash their clothes in a ditch in a park in Hermosillo as they hope to be called for processing, 1951. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



The daily lineup at the Hermosillo processing center, 1951. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



Aspirantes mass outside the stadium in Hermosillo hoping to be called, 1951. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



Guard at an *aspirante* collection point, Monterrey, 1956. Scenes like this were common at all the bracero processing centers, including the one in Hermosillo that Gladwin Hill and Ernesto Galarza described so thoroughly in 1951. Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.



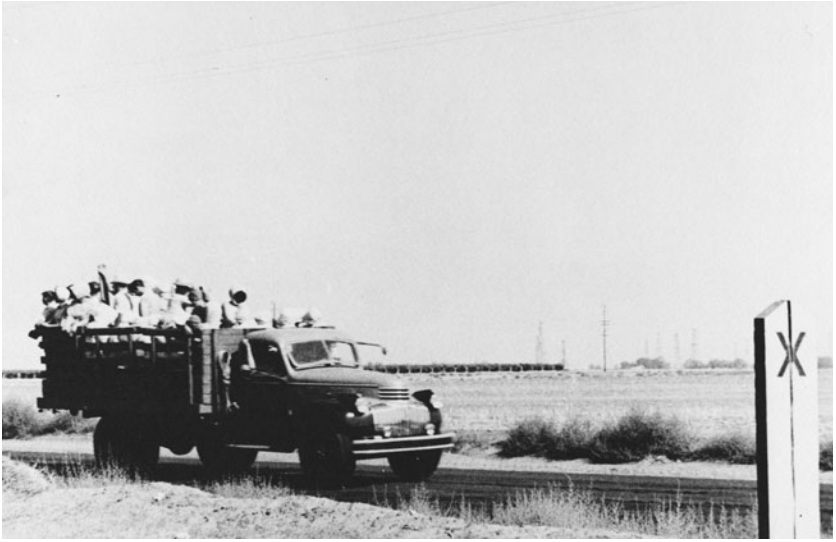
Newly processed braceros hold their contracts, probably Hermosillo, ca. 1951. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



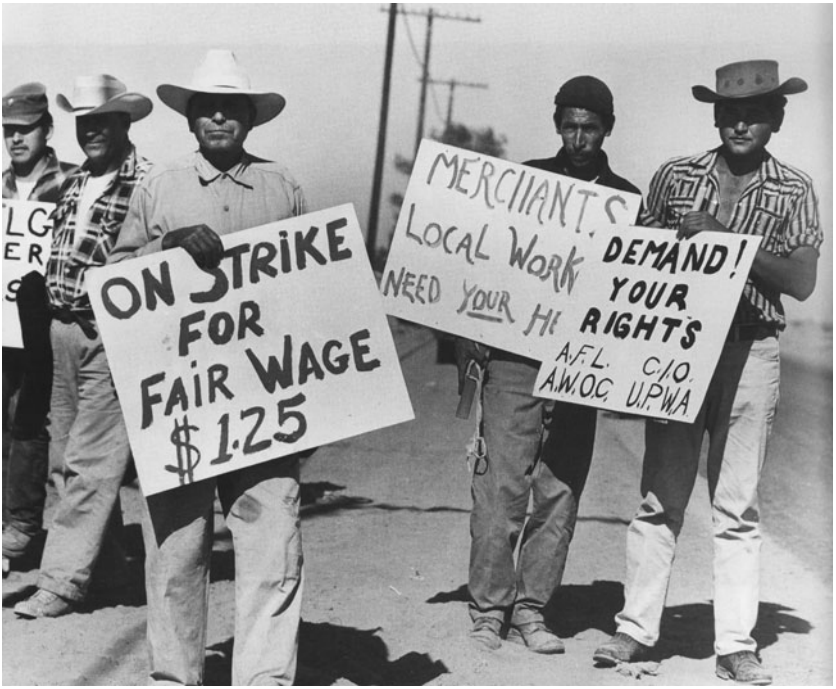
"El Carralon"—the notorious corral in the Peach Bowl exposed during the 1957 harvest season. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



A doctor's office in the Salinas Valley in 1956. The practices of Pan American Underwriters, like the other providers of insurance for braceros, came under increasing scrutiny as the program wore on. Caught up in the investigations of Stanley Mosk and his associates in the Brown administration, insurance providers like Pan American (and its affiliate Continental Casualty) were eventually shown to have regularly received "gratuities" from growers for administering the program to their liking. Photograph by Leonard Nadel, Division of Industry, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution. Used by permission.



Typical, though illegal, transportation for braceros (and other farm workers), 1950s. Transportation like this led to innumerable injuries and deaths of farm workers—braceros and domestics alike—over the course of the program. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries.



Above: Strikers in the 1961 Imperial Valley lettuce strike. Photograph by Arthur Dubinsky. Source: Street, *Photographing Farmworkers*, 212.



Late-night organizing meeting of the AWOC, Stockton, 1960. Photograph by Earnest Lowe. © The Image Works. Used by permission.



High school students picking berries in 1963. As the bracero program was terminated, growers sought access to any untapped labor pools they could get their hands on, including high-schoolers. The Department of Labor assisted by establishing "A-Teams" (Athletes in Temporary Employment as Agricultural Manpower). Photograph by the *San Francisco Examiner*. Source: Street, *Photographing Farmworkers*, 205.



The march of rent strikers from the Woodville and Linnell camps and their supporters in Tulare, 1965. Organized with the assistance of CSO veteran Gilbert Padilla, the rent strike galvanized the emerging farm worker union that was to eventually become the UFW. Photograph by Harvey Richards. Credit: Harvey Richards Media Archive, www.estuarypress.com.



A later version of the University of California–Blackwelder mechanized tomato harvester that became ubiquitous in the canning-tomato fields with the end of the bracero program. Photograph by Akos Szoboszlay. Courtesy of the photographer.



Picketers call scabs out of grape fields near Delano during the 1965 AWOC-NFWA strike that launched the farm workers movement. Photograph by Harvey Richards. Credit: Harvey Richards Media Archive, www.estuarypress.com.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Operation Wetback

Preserving the Status Quo

I wish to emphasize the great differences between the illegal Mexican migrants known as "wetbacks," and the legal Mexican nationals known as "braceros." The legal migrants, who enter the United States for farm employment under controlled conditions sanctioned by the Migrant Labor Agreement of 1954 with Mexico receive the same wages and other guarantees that the United States' workers obtain, and are a welcome and appreciated addition to our work force. The illegals, who cross the border furtively in violation of the laws and regulations of both the United States and Mexico cause serious social and economic problems for the United States.

Attorney General Herbert Brownell Jr., June 9, 1954

Prior to "operation wetback," farmers in this area [San Diego County] used wetbacks exclusively. Now through the cooperation of Farm Placement we are given the location of the camp where the applicant for contract labor intends to house the men. It is rather a bitter pill for the poor farmers to have to provide even the minimum requirements that we request. Hence their haste to try to obtain relief from the Assemblyman, etc. . . . In the course of our conversation this morning [Assemblyman] Bulen agreed that the employee housing law was a good law and that he understood that it was our duty to enforce it. He merely would like us to use a certain amount of discretion as to the time limit placed on compliance. I assured Mr. Bulen it has never been the policy of the Division to harass the farmers but if anything we lean over backwards to help them. I think Mr. Bulen was suitably impressed by the fact that we are not treating the farmers unfairly.

H. H. Harris, District Representative, Division of Housing, September 7, 1954

OPERATION WETBACK WAS HERALDED into being on June 9, 1954. Announcing that by June 17 they would move 491 more Border Patrol agents from elsewhere in the country to the region along the United States–Mexico boundary in California (where currently there were only 256), the Department of Justice and the INS vowed to search for, apprehend, and deport illegal immigrants in a program the attorney general promised would "not be a hit and run project." As the California border region was swept clean, the agents would move inland and up through the valleys of the state, shift their focus east into Texas, and eventually reach as far as Chicago. But, of course, Operation Wetback did not spring, Athena-like, fully formed from the head of Zeus on June 9. It was the product of a history of diplomatic brinkmanship between Mexico and the United States over the form emigration to the United States was to take in the midst of the bracero program, of growing public concern over the scope of undocumented immigration, especially as it affected employment opportunities for domestic workers,* and of shifting, internal, bureaucratic pressures facing the INS.[1]

Unilateral Recruiting

The 1951 international agreement governing the bracero program was set to expire on December 31, 1953. California growers (together with their counterparts in Texas and Arizona) were, as we learned in the previous chapter, determined to assure that Mexico did not hold all the cards as the program was being renegotiated. The relevant departments in the U.S. government—State, Agriculture, and Labor—all apparently felt the same way. Undersecretary of Labor Lloyd Mashburn (who had cut his teeth as a member of the labor law enforcement division of DIR) had already argued before Congress in March 1953 that PL 78 (also up for renewal at the end of 1953) should only be extended for one year as a means of bringing Mexico to heel. A longer-term renewal, he argued, would effectively reinforce Mexico's bargaining position, which he characterized as "you need the people; you are coming with your hands out. We are going to be pretty hard to get along with."[2]

Mexico did indeed want to achieve significant changes in the program as it was renegotiated. Primarily, it wanted a greater say in the determination of wages (especially, though not exclusively, in Texas). It also wanted the United

* In May, representatives of U.S. labor unions met with their Mexican counterparts—"aggregating upwards of 15,000,000 workers"—"to map a program for dealing with problems of both the illegal 'wetback' traffic and the legal entrance of labor." Gladwin Hill, "Labor Units Plan to Aid 'Wetbacks': U.S., Mexico Groups Meet to Map Plans to Protect Rights of Migrants," *New York Times*, May 16, 1954, 71.

States to enact legislation that would punish employers of illegal immigrants, in part because the steady influx of undocumented workers undermined Mexico's bargaining position as it sought to renegotiate the bracero agreements.* As negotiations over the international agreement opened in September 1953, "it was obvious," as Richard Craig put it, "that the new Eisenhower administration had followed through on hard-line recommendations from farm groups, legislators, and administrators." It made this clear not only when "the U.S. Delegation presented its Mexican hosts with a novel bargaining approach"—a list of six major changes to the agreement, ranging from the location of centers, to stronger language preserving the U.S. government's sole power to determine prevailing wages, to the implementation of a bonus system to keep braceros from "skipping"—but also when it allowed its proxies (in this case, the FPS's Edward Hayes) to make public, in the midst of the negotiating period, a U.S. Department of Justice plan to open up the border to willing crossers if Mexico failed to implement a new agreement satisfactory to U.S. farming interests.[3]

With the United States engaged in a sustained effort to rescue rapidly deteriorating relations with a number of Latin American countries, Mexico sought to call its bluff, refusing to agree to the United States' stance that it alone ought to determine wages and working conditions. In response, U.S. delegates dug in their heels, agreeing to get "major concessions or no agreement at all," a position they knew would gain significant support in Congress, including from the architects of PL 78, Senator Ellender and Representative Poage. Despite increasing ill will between the two delegations, Mexico and the United States agreed, even as talks stalled, to extend the current agreement until January 15, 1954, in hopes of reaching a settlement. When no agreement was reached during the extension, the U.S. departments of State, Labor, and Justice issued a joint communiqué announcing that unilateral recruiting of braceros would begin on January 18. Mexico quickly responded by seeking to shut its border with the United States, a move Edward Hayes said would lead to a "possible disaster" for California farmers as their ready access to Mexican workers was cut off.[4]

It didn't. What it did lead to was perhaps the ugliest, but also maybe the most

* It is true the Mexican government was no steady friend of the braceros—any analysis of the actions of the Mexican consuls in California would readily show this (see, for example, Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 59–64)—but it is likewise true the rise of the Popular Party under labor organizer Vincente Lombardo Toledano attacking the permissiveness of the Mexican government in allowing the United States unfettered access to undocumented workers from one direction, and the Mexican Chamber of Commerce and agribusiness interests attacking it from another, together with sustained press interest, forced it to stiffen its stance as negotiations opened in the fall of 1953; see García, *Operation Wetback*, 79–81.

indicative, tussle over the bodies—and the rights—of the Mexican workers of the whole program. Whatever the hopes of the Mexican government in discouraging its citizens from crossing into the United States, thousands of prospective braceros rushed to Mexicali in anticipation of a new unilateral recruiting center being opened across the border in El Centro. As unilateral recruiting finally got under way on January 22, some quickly learned to make their way into Calexico on the U.S. side of the border, where they could surrender themselves to Border Patrol agents who would escort them back to the border. There, under the Border Patrol's watchful eyes, they were expected to step back into Mexico, turn around quickly, and "legally" reenter the United States to be contracted as braceros.* The following day, Saturday, January 23, as some fifty border-crossers attempted this maneuver, what the Associated Press called "a violent game of foot tag, with beating and jailing, broke out" as Mexican border guards attempted to prevent the workers' return to the United States.† News services reported there were fistfights between prospective braceros and Mexican police and that "numerous braceros were seized and beaten and many hauled away to jail." Some five hundred others "staged a protest march on the governor's palace but were told by a governor's representative that the border would remain closed." Sometimes an individual worker would find himself pulled north by U.S. border agents and south by Mexican police as each tugged for control of the fate of the bracero, as in an oft-cited photograph from the *Los Angeles Times*.[5]

Over the course of the next couple of weeks, riots broke out in border towns along the length of the line. "In virtually each instance the pattern was the same," according to Craig. "When the desperate Mexicans rushed the border, [Mexican] guards repelled them with clubs, fists, water hoses, and guns." Within only a week, however, nearly all the bracero workers California farmers hoped for had been contracted—the *Imperial Valley Press* called the whole thing a "riotous success"—and so on January 28 the United States took a turn in trying

* The government justified its actions as a logical effort "to divert the greatest possible portion of the migratory movement into legal channels where it can be controlled, regulated, and limited to the fulfillment of legitimate needs and legal protection extended to as many migrant workers as possible." Mexico's intransigence in negotiations necessitated "an interim program to move potential illegal migrants into legal channels . . . pending such time as it may be possible to reach agreement with Mexico." W. B. Smith (acting secretary, Department of State) to Reuther, January 30, 1954, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 3.

† According to Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 66–67, workers rounded up on the streets of Calexico were supplemented by "busloads of Wetbacks" that growers delivered "by prearrangement" to border officials to be "dried out"; and by numerous undocumented migrants held in detention centers who were delivered to El Centro by the INS for certification.

to seal off the border. This attempt too was met by rioting, rock hurling, and fistfights as *aspirantes* competed for the few remaining positions in California, leading to numerous injuries and even death when workers, and apparently one small girl, were trampled and pushed aside.[6]

Even as the El Centro reception center was shutting down contracting, with the now-traditional oversupply of labor for the Imperial Valley carrot harvest assured, in Washington, the USDL's comptroller general determined that unilateral recruiting violated PL 78 and that therefore no departmental funds could be spent on it. It had to cease. Even so, it was clear that the diplomatic gamble—instituting a high-risk, go-it-alone policy that threatened relations between not only the United States and Mexico, but perhaps throughout the western hemisphere—had paid off. The spectacle at the border deeply humiliated Mexico (and many Mexicans) as it made clear the limits of its own economic modernism and independence. Mexico requested that negotiation on the international agreement be reopened, but now it was negotiating from a considerably weakened position. The rush to the border by poor and often hungry workers had shown just how little control it had over the out-migration of its own citizens.[7]

At the same time it showed clearly (as if this was not already obvious) that the United States, as represented by officials at the apex of power in the departments of State, Justice, and Labor (to say nothing of Agriculture lurking in the background), understood that undocumented workers from Mexico were not merely desperate workers, and not merely individuals seeking a superior wage or livelihood, but predominantly a flexible pool of labor available to be called rapidly into existence and manipulated at will. While doing so might unleash some unseemly problems around the edges—stones being thrown at reporters, little girls pushed in front of oncoming trains by the pulsating mob—such problems were a small price to pay for nearly unfettered access to a labor source almost completely without power, and with, for the era, remarkably few requirements for entrance into the country, even when workers did so legally.*[8]

* Such is the implicit, if not always explicit, conclusion of the analysis made by Hadley, "Critical Analysis of the Wetback Problem," especially as she examines growers' complaints about "red tape" in the bracero program in relation to visa requirements for others entering the United States. For example, she quotes a portion of a nonimmigrant visa application given to French visitors, which, among other things, required the applicant to list "the name and address of all organizations, veterans' associations, workers or employers associations, professional groups, societies, clubs, circles, political parties, literary or cultural societies in which you may have taken part since December 31, 1918." Applicants were expected to provide the precise dates of their involvement with each organization, their role in it, and an explanation of the "character and aims pursued by each one of the organizations" (337).

Indeed. So clearly valuable had this demonstration been—not only for bringing Mexico to heel and assuring its demands (e.g., to represent workers in wage bargaining) would go nowhere, but also for showing how quickly and efficiently the reserve army could be called into existence and set to work—that growers, outraged by the USDL's decision that unilateral recruiting was illegal under the law, immediately set about getting PL 78 changed. They argued that without the option of unilateral recruiting "crops might spoil in the fields." Just as negotiations over a new international agreement were recommencing, Congress therefore took up House Joint Resolution 355. The bill amended Section 501 of PL 78, which currently read: "For the purposes of assisting in such production of agricultural commodities and products as the Secretary of Agriculture deems necessary, by supplying agricultural workers from the Republic of Mexico (pursuant to arrangements between the United States and the Republic of Mexico), the Secretary of Labor is authorized. . . ." The amended version changed the parenthetical statement to read instead: "(pursuant to arrangements between the United States and the Republic of Mexico, *or after every practical effort has been made to negotiate and reach agreement on such arrangements*). . . ." Though there was some opposition in Congress, the resolution passed easily in the first week of March. On the advice of the State Department, however, Eisenhower delayed signing the bill until negotiations with Mexico were completed.[9]

While one interpretation of the delay in signing was to "dispel the impression that the purpose of H.J.R. 355 was to provide a club to be held over Mexico's head during the operations of the current agreement and in the negotiation of any future agreements," as historian Juan García notes, "of course that is exactly what H.J.R. 355 did." Galarza put the point even more strongly: "As amended, Public Law 78 now made it plain to Mexico that its failure to accept the terms offered by the Department of Labor on behalf of American growers still left the United States the option of unilateral hiring."[10] It was an obvious weapon in the ongoing struggle to secure a totally compliant labor force for agribusiness.*

* However, it was not yet, quite, exactly *all* the growers wanted. John Phillips, Republican representative of California and reliable ally of big farm interests, was admirably honest when he argued that what farmers wanted (and what he would try to get) was a "simple crossing card system" that, as the *New York Times* reported (quoting Phillips), "would allow Mexicans to come into the country without a firm contract but would provide for farmers 'to make pledges these workers will be turned over to the immigration authorities when the crops have been harvested. The card-holders might be restricted to a particular area and would be arrested and deported if found in other sections of the state.'" Now there, truly, would be a growers' "dream of heaven"! "California Seeks More 'Wetbacks': Labor Shortage is Threatened, Nixon Asked to Help Ease Curbs, Newspaper Says," *New York Times*, September 7, 1953, 1.

But the law did something else too. For a time and to a large degree, it obviated the need for an *active* supplementary reserve of undocumented labor. "The most skeptical of farm employers," Galarza concluded, "could see that the private black market was no longer vital, that a public one could be created at will"—a *latent* reserve army was sufficient. And thus the political way was paved for a wholesale crackdown on illegal immigration.[11]

Operation Wetback

The pressure for a crackdown had long been mounting. Galarza argued that public opinion against illegal immigration "had been aroused by the so-called Wetback Strikes of 1951 and 1952 organized by the National Farm Labor Union" (see chapters 5 and 6), which was certainly partly true. But it had also been raised by an onslaught of articles in the daily and periodic press detailing the "wetback invasion" of the United States.* The number of undocumented aliens in the country did seem to be increasing rapidly. The number of undocumented aliens apprehended—a proxy of the magnitude of the number in the United States, if nothing else—rose from 468,339 in 1950 to 885,587 in 1953. In 1954, it jumped to 1,089,583. Even sympathetic reporters like Gladwin Hill of the *New York Times* rarely escaped the language of "invasion," "flood," and "influx" when talking about illegal border-crossers.† While making clear that those who crossed into the United States were certainly a remarkable lot ("It takes more than ordinary initiative to marshal a grubstake, get to the border and run the Border Patrol's gauntlet, all for the purpose of working harder at lower wages than most United States citizens will accept"), and while recognizing

* Most were quite negative and alarmist. For an admiring view of the "wetback," as well as a good description of the "fantastically organized transportation system that operates with full knowledge of federal officials," see Don Dwiggins, "Smuggling of Wetbacks Big Business," [Los Angeles?] *Daily News*, datelined December 22 [1953?], clipping, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

† Activists occasionally did better. Fay Bennett, the longtime executive secretary of the National Sharecroppers Fund, for example, was explicit in laying blame for the rise in the number of illegal border-crossers at the feet of "corporation farmers'" labor practices and compliant members of Congress "whose voices are loudest against immigration from Europe but turn a deaf ear to the sound of thousands of illegal immigrants from south of the border. One can only conclude," wrote Bennett, "that the large corporate farmers who want available at all times a large supply of cheap labor, have influence with these lawmakers." Fay Bennett, "Laws for Farm Workers Urged," letter to the editor, *New York Times*, August 31, 1953, 16. See also Robert J. Alexander, "What to Do About the Wetbacks: A Three-Point Program of Action," *Socialist Call*, March 1954, typescript copy, Galarza Papers, Box 50, File 12.

that the reward for their efforts was not infrequently death (some four hundred border-crossers drowned during a single flood season in 1953, for example), Hill still wrote of "a never ending invasion of the United States" and "daily . . . devious incursions from the south" that added up to "a million or more a year."[12]

The language of deviousness resonated. In addition to frequent news reports detailing the sheer number of illegal entrants to the United States, papers (and Congress) were full of worries that among the border-crossers were not only criminals, racketeers, drug runners, and perhaps prostitutes, but especially an untold number of "Reds," bent, it seemed, on "subversion"—a fear NAWU had little compunction in exploiting. Nor did other unions. While the Teamsters argued the "wetback menace" was "a weapon leveled at American wage and working standards by large employers of cheap labor in the South and Southwest and a social and health danger to the area affected," while it described the appalling housing conditions in which undocumented workers and their families lived, and while it called the children of undocumented migrants the "most tragic victims of all," it opened its March 1954 exposé of the "wetback" problem by calling it a "threat to national security," echoing INS estimates (given in the context of seeking more funding)* that "more than 100 Communists a day are coming across the sparsely patrolled border," and arguing that "security screening at the border has virtually become a joke, according to evidence before congressional committees."[13]

In addition to the intensive reporting and the concerted union effort to highlight the "menace," U.S. Attorney General Herbert Brownell made a heavily publicized tour of the California border region in August 1953—prompted in part by demands from Mexico that the United States better control the border—seeking to make a "personal study of the 'wetback' situation." After his tour he called "illegal immigration . . . one of the nation's gravest law enforcement problems, and vowed to develop a concerted plan, involving both national and international measures" for addressing the "invasion." The *New York Times* reported, "The Immigration Service has a four-point program which it contends could bring the 'wetback' traffic under control. The program calls for enough additional manpower to maintain a reasonable surveillance of the border (some officials estimate the tripling of the present force would do it); assuring farmers adequate legitimate labor supply; deporting captured 'wetbacks' deep enough into Mexico to discourage their returning; and prosecution of persistent offend-

* Attorney General Herbert Brownell, while admitting that "subversives" could get across the border, had in fact found during a tour of the border in August 1953 "no evidence" they had done so. "'Wetbacks' Called a Major Problem: Brownell Seeks Plan to Curb Influx and Crime—He Also Cites Danger of Subversion," *New York Times*, August 17, 1953, 11.

ers." Operation Wetback was something like this program, but it did not come until ten months later.[14]

In the immediate wake of his tour, when Brownell sought to enhance Border Patrol numbers and increase arrests—that is, in September 1953, just as the harvest was moving toward its peak—California growers howled in protest and secured the cooperation of Vice President Nixon in reining in the Border Patrol. Increased enforcement was quietly curtailed, aided in no small part by Congress reducing the Border Patrol's budget and personnel.* Congress also consistently refused to enact legislation, demanded by Mexico, making it a felony for employers to knowingly hire undocumented workers. As INS Assistant Commissioner Kelly had earlier remarked, "It would almost seem that the reason for the failure of the United States to properly protect its border is to make way for the illegal entry of cheap labor into certain privileged areas."[15]

One reason for the vehement grower opposition to border enforcement was that it was clear "wetbacks" functioned best not so much as a supplement to braceros but as an integral, if unacknowledged, *part* of the bracero program that was made possible by what can only be called a form of studied and *structural* bureaucratic ignorance. Undocumented workers were, as far as the administrators of the bracero program were concerned, officially invisible. The very process of certification of need for braceros reinforced this invisibility. Though, by some estimates, there were 50,000 undocumented workers in the California agricultural labor pool in 1953,† deployed by some 400 contractors, to fill some 25,000 to 30,000 positions, procedures for determining labor need typically ignored this population. FPS *could not* count it in its estimates because its estimates were required to be of the availability of domestic workers. And it could not count it against the number of braceros to be imported because that would

* Cutting funds for the Border Patrol was a favorite pastime of Congress in the first few years of the 1950s. When the INS sought to "airlift" undocumented migrants into the Mexican interior, for example, California Representative John Phillips was instrumental in seeing that additional funding was stripped from the appropriations bill, calling the airlifts "one of the most extravagant ideas any bureaucracy has ever thought up." Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Ousting by Aircraft Revived: Action by Congress Remedies Shortage of Funds—Pact with Mexico Extended," *New York Times*, June 13, 1952, 11; "Cut to Funds Ends Bar to 'Wetbacks,'" *New York Times*, June 26, 1952, 27; see also "Fund Cut Threatens Curb on 'Wetbacks,'" *New York Times*, August 24, 1951, 16; notes, "The Wetback Problem," n.d. [1952], Galarza Papers, Box 50, File 10; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 473–74; García, *Operation Wetback*, 119–20.

† By June 1954, the California Department of Employment was estimating that there were "some one hundred thousand Mexicans . . . filling jobs in California," not all of whom, of course, were there illegally nor working in agriculture. Mason (Department of Employment) to Senator John Thomson, June 24, 1954, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

imply an endorsement of mixed crews and the hiring of undocumented workers by farmers receiving Mexican National contract workers, acts specifically prohibited in Section 504 of PL 78.[16]

Rarely in the FPS's deliberations did the number of undocumented workers in a local labor pool affect its determination of need for braceros. According to testimony Edward Hayes gave before the House of Representatives, determination of need was itself a chaotic process in which "need for workers is made known to us in our usual contacts. . . . The grower sends the order to us," which was then usually taken at face value. Investigations of need were rarely undertaken.* And if domestic workers raised the issue of undocumented workers saturating the labor market, representatives of the FPS and other agencies involved in need determination usually just shook their heads and explained that the problem of "wetbacks" was one they had no control over: it was under the purview of the INS. Undocumented workers, in other words, could drive out domestic workers (one scholarly article of the mid-1950s equated uprooted domestic workers with the Displaced Persons of post–World War II Europe), thereby creating a "need" for braceros, even when there was an evident (if officially invisible) oversupply of labor in a region. This was not a privilege big California growers wanted to relinquish lightly.[17]

However, as unilateral recruiting proved its worth (and was institutionalized in the amended PL 78), and as political pressures against undocumented aliens mounted (especially as the issue got tied up in the general anticommunism hysteria), it was a privilege some growers began to see as increasingly expendable, especially if the bracero program could be further tailored to their interests. The Associated Farmers of Fresno County together with the Fresno County Farm Bureau telegraphed Governor Knight in May 1955, agreeing that "all illegal aliens of whatever nationality" should be deported from California, but that this should be linked to a "reduction in the minimum contract period for Mexican National labor in order to protect the small grower who is faced with a labor shortage and may be forced to use Mexican national labor to supplement local workers." The Associated Farmers and Farm Bureau support for deportation was part of a broader, and purely strategic, opening of agriculture toward the possibility of mass "wetback" removals in the wake of Congress approving

* Indeed, the very idea that the California Department of Employment should even begin to *publicly* investigate the need for Mexican workers, and not just accept the growers' word for it, was anathema to organizations like the CFBF, which threatened, if Employment followed through, with withdrawing agriculture's support for the governor. McColly to Mason, March 18, 1954; McColly to Burkett, March 20, 1954; Mason to McColly, March 22, 1954, all in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

unilateral recruiting and the new, quite favorable Migrant Labor Agreement of 1954. Especially if it took place before the harvest peak, growers understood, any roundup would be limited in the economic damage it would inflict and would provide sufficient political cover to assure that other, broadly popular measures designed to rein in agribusiness's use of undocumented labor—especially laws penalizing the hiring of illegal workers—would die in Congress (as they did).[18]

Such bills (one providing for injunctions against employers who "knowingly" hired illegal labor and another penalizing the transporting and harboring of undocumented aliens) were part of Attorney General Brownell's long-delayed plan to address the "wetback" crisis he had discovered in his August 1953 border trip.* The hammering out of the international agreement, together with major growers associations signaling the political viability of a crackdown on undocumented migrants, indicated to Brownell and President Eisenhower that the time had come to act. In a meeting with labor and religious leaders at the end of March 1954, Brownell pledged to implement his program of increased border enforcement, workplace raids, and legislative action.[19]

First, however, he hired retired Major General Joseph Swing as the new commissioner of the INS. Swing had been commander of the Sixth Army in California at the time of Brownell's August trip and was a friend of the president. Swing (along with the BES's Robert Goodwin) had been instrumental in scuttling the attorney general's plan, vetted during the California tour, of sending the army to secure the border. Swing claimed to have told Brownell that it was a "perfectly horrible" plan that would exacerbate relations with Mexico. Six months later, upon his retirement from the army (Swing later testified), Brownell encouraged him to come to Washington "and show us how to do it without closing the border." If Swing was opposed to the formal militarization of the border, he was not at all opposed to essentially militarizing the Border Patrol, hiring retired generals as consultants, quickly reorganizing the Border Patrol along military lines, and creating a number of rapid-strike "task forces" to support the everyday work of the service. As a result "what developed into 'Operation Wetback' had from the outset all the earmarks of a military offensive."[20]

The operation was carefully coordinated with Mexico—indeed, it had been

* As García details, Brownell heard on that trip from innumerable "mayors, judges, district attorneys, county supervisors, chiefs of police, and sheriffs, most of whom complained about how 'illegals' drained their limited resources." There was, in other words, considerable political pressure on the Eisenhower administration to be seen to be doing *something*. *Operation Wetback*, 158.

originally scheduled for June 1, but was delayed for ten days so Mexico could position enough trains near the border to take departed migrants deep into the interior—but it was even more carefully planned with the needs of growers and agricultural lobbies in mind. At the insistence of the Labor Department, the INS assured that the operation would also net illegal workers in nonagricultural industries in the expectation this would win over farmer organizations, which would see the operation was not aimed at them alone. Labor also convinced Swing of the necessity of giving employers, agricultural or otherwise, advance warning of the drive so they could plan for its effects. Even more, Swing and his agents not only explicitly promised growers that the Department of Labor would assure legal braceros to any grower who applied, spending ten days in border states before Operation Wetback was launched, assuring growers that "if there is any employer who cannot get legal labor all he had to do is let either the Department of Labor or Immigration know and we will see that he gets it" and that the USDL implemented new "procedures for expediting last-minute importations in case of emergency." They also agreed that any apprehended "specials" (undocumented workers employed in skilled positions or with significant experience) would be quickly legalized and returned to their employers. Similarly, Mexico, worried about a sudden influx of tens of thousands of deported, unemployed workers, was assured that the legalization and contracting of deported workers would be pushed into high gear.[21]

The first phase of deportations began, in California, on June 10 amid well-orchestrated publicity designed to give the impression of a much bigger drive than the INS could actually manage given its limited budget and personnel. Local police were encouraged to arrest suspected undocumented migrants on charges of vagrancy and to hold them until they could be organized into a massive "buslift" to the border. Over the course of the next week, according to the INS, 10,917 undocumented migrants were arrested in California at road and railroad blockades and thousands more rounded up in workplace raids. Many of those put on the deportation buses were driven past bilingual billboards on their way to Nogales reading "NOTICE: The United States Needs Legal Farm Workers. The Mayor of Your Town Can Arrange for Your Contracting," and warning them that illegal entrants would henceforth be imprisoned. Untold others left the country "voluntarily," so many, again according to the INS, that "it was impossible to count them." As General Swing made another tour of the Southwest to assure growers there would be plenty of workers for them despite the roundups, there was no doubt Operation Wetback "caused terror and fear to spread throughout the Mexican American community in California and the Southwest," as Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans were reminded of

the wholesale deportations of the 1930s and the anti-Mexican violence of World War II.*[22]

As Operation Wetback moved into a second, also well-publicized, phase in California on June 17—a radio-coordinated set of raids and street apprehensions in "ever-widening circles" emanating from El Centro, circles that eventually moved north into the Los Angeles basin and beyond into the Central Valley—the terror and fear intensified. Numerous legal residents and citizens were caught up in the dragnet, and families were torn asunder.† The second phase of the operation rounded up about 21,000 "aliens" in California before it was wound down on June 30, for a total of between 50,000 and 55,000 apprehensions over the course of the month. The INS crowed that in California alone, some 540,000 undocumented migrants were either deported or left the country voluntarily during the drive, a number Operation Wetback historian Juan García finds "highly questionable," as it implies that at least 485,000 (more than 16,000 a day) would have had to have "voluntarily" made their way across the border during the month.‡ He also found something else important: that during the buslift phase of the operation, between 30 and 40 percent of those apprehended were unemployed. García suggests this level of unemployment "does not lend credence to the contention that undocumented workers deprive U.S. citizens of jobs." While perhaps true to an extent (especially at the harvest nadir), it perhaps even more indicates that Operation Wetback was well timed. Had it been implemented immediately after Attorney General Brownell's August 1953 tour at the height of the harvest season, even if it had been im-

* Hernández, "Crimes and Consequences," 436–37, details some of the standard abusive practices of the Border Patrol during this era, including what the Service called "peeling"—close-crop cutting the hair of "repeat offenders" with patterns of crosses, Mohawks, half-shaves, and the like.

† Some sense of the anguish Operation Wetback caused citizen families can be seen in this letter from a lawyer to Governor Knight: "By reason of the fact that certain rights guaranteed to residents of the State of California under the constitution of the State of California have been violated in and around this area affecting persons, some of whom are clients of mine, whom I sought to represent before the United States Immigration Department in this district and who were not given a hearing or afforded an opportunity to be represented by counsel, but were deported without having had an opportunity to seek counsel after I had made a request that I be permitted to see them, I felt that it behooves me to call upon you as Governor of the State of California to invoke the provisions of the California Constitution on behalf of my clients and all persons who have been denied the protection of the laws of the Constitution of the United States." Widoff to Knight, June 22, 1954, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

‡ García writes: "Nowhere in the records of the INS on the drive is there evidence to support" its claims of voluntary returns to Mexico on such a large scale (228).

plemented in March when Brownell made his promise to labor and religious groups and the harvest in the border areas of California and Arizona was in full swing, numbers would likely have been different.[23]

With the "success" of Operation Wetback—Calavita contends that Swing engaged in only a "slight exaggeration" when he announced the "so-called 'wetback' problem no longer exists. . . . The border has been secured"—the Eisenhower administration was content to let the bills to penalize employers of illegal workers and to stiffen penalties on transporting and harboring them molder in Congress. Given California growers' support for Operation Wetback, which paid high political dividends to the administration, Eisenhower was not, in García's estimation, willing to pay the severe political price passage of the bills would have cost. The bills, though favorably reported out of committee, were never acted on.[24]

If Brownell reneged on his March promise to labor, Swing and the Department of Labor were true to their word to growers. As the "wetback" tap was being turned down, the bracero tap was opened up in full. In 1953, 201,380 contract Nationals were imported into the United States. In 1954, the number jumped to 309,033, an increase of 53 percent (by contrast, apprehensions of undocumented migrants increased 23% in this year of Operation Wetback). By 1956, the number of imported braceros reached a peak of 445,197. Commissioner Swing's characterization that there was an "exchange" of undocumented workers was therefore not quite accurate. Nor is it accurate to say, as does Richard Craig, that by April 1955, "the wetback had, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist,"* though Operation Wetback did, as García concludes, "slow the influx for a short time."[25]

After Operation Wetback: Bracero Work and Life in the California Fields

California growers may have publicly supported Operation Wetback, but as the fall harvest geared up, they were also quick to object to any practice that, as a result, required them to alter their traditional modes of operation. On August 17, 1954, John Baxter, the DoH's area supervisor for the San Diego region, wrote grower and bracero user Roland Wight a mild letter (copied to the San Diego

* It is certainly true that the press seemed to lose interest in the phenomenon in the wake of the Operation; where searches in the *New York Times* archives on the word "wetback" produced dozens of stories for the first three quarters of 1954, it turned up precisely zero for the final quarter. The last article published in 1954 was a short note announcing that the INS had decided to delay its raids in Chicago since so many "Mexicans" had agreed to repatriate "voluntarily." "'Wetback' Roundup Delayed," *New York Times*, September 18, 1954, 16.

County Farmers Association, the labor association to whom the braceros were contracted, and the FPS), asking him to bring his labor camp up to code, and to inform the DoH when he had done so. Among the infractions discovered in an August 13 inspection were problems of accumulated trash, a filthy kitchen, a lack of hot water, and (apparently) no flush toilets. No threats of citation, fine, or camp closure were made. Baxter's letter brought a polite, but sharp, response from Assemblyman Edwin Bulen, who noted that San Diego farmers had been fully cooperative in Operation Wetback, even though it meant that San Diego now had to switch from "wetbacks" to legal Mexican Nationals. Bulen argued it was unreasonable, in the circumstances, to ask for improvements in camps in the midst of "the emergency of harvesting." To do so would "require that crops go unharvested." The chief of the DoH quickly dispatched DoH District Representative H. H. Harris (Baxter's boss) to San Diego to smooth ruffled feathers. Wight offered to clean up the camp immediately, and to attend to the problems of plumbing after the harvest was over, which agreement, despite being in complete violation of the law (and the international agreement), Harris readily accepted.* Harris proclaimed Assemblyman Bulen "suitably impressed" with DoH's willingness to accommodate farmers. Apparently Harris was a little quick in his assessment of Bulen's impressibility: by the end of the month, Bulen had secured an audience with the governor to complain of DoH harassment. San Diego growers had little interest in improving conditions beyond what they had offered "wetbacks" in previous years.[26]

This fact flies in the face of the general and long-held assumption (among growers and reformers alike) that with more domestic workers, or with bracero labor that came complete with a set of contractual obligations as to housing and other conditions, conditions for workers in labor camps (and the fields) would necessarily have to improve. According to the California Department of Employment, in the wake of Operation Wetback (and despite the high percentage of unemployed among those deported), "unemployment insurance claims dropped some $325,000 for several weeks following the drive and more than 50,000 jobs in agricultural industry were opened up for California citizens."

* Whatever the struggles within the DoH to get farmers to provide even minimally compliant housing for workers, when presenting the California case to federal authorities, DoH was proud to claim that "between 1950 and 1955, the number of farm labor camps, with a capacity of 5 or more, increased from 5,000 to 7,500" and that between 1949 and 1954, "approximately $9,000,000 was spent by California farmers in construction, additions, and improvements of housing for workers in these camps." State of California, Department of Employment, FPS, "California Progress in Programs Benefiting Agricultural Migrants" (report to BES), June 3, 1955, 8, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 10.

According to Edward Hayes, new unemployment insurance claims between June 17 (as the second phase of Operation Wetback got under way) and July 8 declined by 15 percent—as compared to 4 percent for the same period in 1953. Such efforts seemed to be temporary. Not only had California's use of braceros increased by 25 percent at the harvest labor peak, but braceros—tied by contract to a single employer and therefore not free labor in even the minimal sense that undocumented workers were*—were coming to dominate the harvest in more and more crops. Even the BES's Glenn Brockway admitted that bracero use in such "dominated crops" was lowering wages.[27]

It was also helping to perpetuate appalling conditions in camps. In the fall of 1955, Ernesto Galarza was commissioned by the United States Section of the Joint United States–Mexico Trade Union Committee to undertake a field study of "compliance with the contractual, legal and civil rights of agricultural contract labor in the United States." Funded by a grant-in-aid from the Fund for the Republic, the field research, conducted between September and December, resulted in the well-known *Strangers in Our Fields*.† Galarza interviewed growers, camp managers, priests who worked with braceros, and other "experts," but mostly he interviewed braceros. After a few attempts to speak to them in their camps and finding that many were reluctant to talk to him, he adopted the strategy of patrolling the roads near farming centers looking for braceros walking to town or otherwise happy to accept a ride. He would interview them in his car, sometimes dropping them off, at their request, some distance from the camp so they would not be seen by the camp manager talking with a stranger.[28]

Camps for braceros were frequently geographically isolated ("hidden in the heart of pear orchards," in the words of a San Jose priest, "about 2 miles back in the middle of the orchard," in the words of a group of braceros from a camp in Planada, down CalPak Road from Merced), and even when they weren't literally so ("our camp is right on the main highway") they were typically a long

* One bracero told Galarza: "I have been a wetback several times. Now it is hard to be a wetback. The contractors will not give you work. But it is better to be a free worker anyway. That way you can choose your boss. This way they tell you you have to fulfill your contract before you can take another job. They will not let you pick your boss. It makes us feel like we have been sold. . . . I paid 30 dollars to get my contract." Notes, "1 Ntl, Camp McCallum," October 4, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

† The Fund for the Republic was established in 1952 by the Ford Foundation as an independent funding agency dedicated to supporting research and action in favor of expanding speech and other civil rights in the midst of McCarthyism. Galarza produced *Strangers* in the midst of strong congressional pressure against the Fund, and the controversy over *Strangers*, to be detailed in the following chapter, did little to lessen that pressure.

distance from town and Mexican workers lacked transportation. Many workers reported walking four or five miles into town to go to the shops, obtain medicine, or go to a movie (on one of their infrequent days off).* Even in centralized camps, like the formerly federal Camp McCallum in Salinas or its counterpart in Soledad, workers were bused two or more hours to their place of work, leaving at four or four-thirty in the morning and often not returning until eight or nine at night.[29]

Though they certainly complained about their lot, many were resigned to it, knowing these were just the conditions of work, over which they had next to no control. As Galarza related in notes of a conversation with two workers in Brawley: "Workers say contractor never brings or allows water in field. But he does bring in cases of soda and sells them for 10¢ a bottle. 'If there was not water the men had to buy sodas to drink with their lunch. The sodas we drank had to be paid for at the camp on pay day. I know there is something in the law about providing water to workers in the fields. But you can't complain or you will be transferred or maybe sent home. I figure it this way: It is better to waste 75¢ or 1 dlr a week on soda when you can't get water than to lose your contract which will make you maybe $20 or $25 a week. All the same this is a violation of the law and it is not just.'" A bracero in Watsonville said, "When I renewed my contract last September the Association rep asked me 'how is the food?' I said 'all right.' He asked me 'how are the beds?' I said 'all right.' He asked me how is the work? I said 'All right.' What else could I say? I was there to renew my contract and I wanted to stay for another 45 days because I had made so little. If I complained that would be the end of my renewal." This was no idle threat.[30]

Mexican Nationals told Galarza innumerable tales of *compadres* being reassigned, denied work, or sent back to Mexico if they complained about work or living conditions, raised questions about their pay, or asked to call or meet with the Mexican consul. "One man was sent home," a group of three braceros in Soledad reported, "because he didn't think it was fair to send a man back for asking for better food. 'This will show all the others not to meddle in the running of the camp,'" they were told by the manager. A bracero in Manteca said, "The food is pretty bad. One day the sandwiches were sour. One man said 'You take me right now to the Socia [growers association] and I will take these sandwiches to them and ask them if they would eat them.' The contractor said 'All right, let's go and you can take your clothes too. You'll be in Mexico by to-

* And days off were indeed infrequent. Workers in Watsonville reported that they had "had no Sundays off in four months," though they did occasionally get Saturdays off since canneries sometimes did not accept deliveries that day. Notes, "Three Nationals—Italian Camp—Watsonville, Calif.," October 1, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

morrow morning.' They started off down the field, but the contractor changed his mind. He would not let the man take the lunch. So he went back to work." When the Manteca workers asked to cook their own food (a right guaranteed in both the international agreement and the standard work contract), they were told that the contract required that they eat in the camp mess hall, and that if they wanted "to cook for yourselves, you can go back home and cook all you want."[31]

The right to prepare one's own food was not the only contractual guarantee habitually broken or ignored.* The governing documents of the program also guaranteed the right of Mexican Nationals to elect their own representatives. But when they did so, they frequently found their representative quickly transferred or repatriated. One group of braceros reported: "We do not have any meetings of any kind in the camp. One of us spoke a little English because he had been here before on contract. He went to the camp head to ask for better meals and more work for all of us. Next thing we know he had been transferred out of the camp. We heard he had been sent back to Mexico." Another bracero told a similar story: "The three men who spoke for the men were sent somewhere else. I saw one of them the next day. He had been sent to another camp just to sleep that night. I asked him if that was his new job but he said 'no' that he had been told he would just sleep there until something was fixed for him. Nobody has seen him again." Nonetheless, braceros not only complained, and they not only sought out the assistance of the Mexican consul (even as they recognized the futility of that move: "There is no use in complaining to the consul anyway. He is too far away and busy with other things"),† they also frequently

* Workers were realistic about the true value of the contract: "A few of us have read our contracts but we just read them for fun. The contracts do not mean anything in this camp. The field boss tells us we should get along with the farmer and not make trouble about the contract. But they tell us about the contract themselves. If we ask for a transfer to more work, they warn us to stay right in this camp or the Immigration will pick us up as we would be violating the laws of this country." "It seems that the contracts are enforced only when the Association can get something out of it. For us the contract has no support. . . . The contract is not good for the workers because there is no authority to guarantee the clauses. The workers never see the consul and the association man is supposed to be our representative but how can he be our representative if he works for the association?" Notes, "Govt Camp—Soledad—8 nationals, October 5, 1955," and notes, "Two Natls—Rudy Avila Camp—Patterson," Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

† Not only was the consul far away and preoccupied, he was often simply absent. The vast majority of the workers Galarza interviewed reported having never seen the consul in the camps where they lived or fields where they worked.

threw down their tools and refused to work until questions of work process, pay, or living conditions had been resolved.[32]

Workers were often clear these were not "strikes." On the one hand, they knew that to be branded a striker was to risk never getting work as a bracero again. "The association does not like strikers," one bracero told Galarza—a fact readily confirmed by the citrus grower quoted in chapter 6 who quickly learned that for even "crackerjack workers" it was best to only write contracts for the minimum period allowed: "You never know what might get into a guy who seemed to be a crackerjack worker." On the other hand, being unfree labor, the idea of strike made no sense. "We cannot strike. How can you strike when you are already in jail?" a Mexican National in Soledad asked.*[33]

Work stoppages in the tomato harvest—where braceros quickly came to dominate the labor pool—were typical of how action in the fields and camps unfolded. One group of workers in the 1955 harvest was paid eleven cents a box—a penny less than the wage that led to the 1951 strike, and more than one-third less than the eighteen-cent wage the strikers eventually won. After conferring among themselves, they elected a representative to ask the contractor for thirteen cents. "The contractor said to our rep—that if that was the way he felt about it he could get on the truck right away. We said we did not mean it that way and we would work for whatever he thought was just. So you see the kind of argument you cannot be making complaints to the contractors, about the wages or food or anything." But as the harvest continued "the picking got so bad we decided that we should take the risk of going back to Mexico so we asked for a raise to 13 cents a box." Three crews totaling one hundred workers stopped work. After "a few hours" the contractor called in the growers association representative who agreed to a wage of fourteen cents a box "but this would be paid at the end of the picking the day we went home. How can we prove how much we should get? We do not get tickets or other signs of our work." A bracero working with another group of tomato pickers reported:

> Last week we all stopped work in the field. It was five days over [the date they should have received their paycheck] and we had not received our wages. It happened that the rancher came on the field and he asked why so many men were

* A sign from a labor camp fence in Stockton reprinted in *Strangers in Our Fields*, 20, gives a hint of how the jail was policed: "Notice: No admission will be granted any visitor not in possession of a pass. Passes may be obtained only from the undersigned. Any person in this building in violation of this notice will be prosecuted for trespassing. [Signed] John O. Templeton, Camp Manager."

> not working. He was a man with leather boots and he got out of a big car. I said to him "no money" and made some signs. So he said something to the contractor and we could see he was very mad. So the contractor went off in a truck and came back with some case and he paid us right there. Then we went back to work. We thought he was going to fire the contractor but it did not happen. I guess the contractors are never fired. The next two days after that we had very good meals. But then we went back to cold sandwiches and sour beans.[34]

Work stoppages led to gains, but they were small (perhaps a penny a box) and almost always temporary—certainly never longer than the forty-five-day contract, which by then was almost universal in California.*

Conditions in the labor camps, Galarza found, ran the gamut "from good to indifferent to downright bad." Most workers interviewed reported having never seen a labor camp inspector, not that they would necessarily trust them. As one worker said: "We have not seen a U.S. labor inspector at this camp. No one of us can remember such a person. Anyway we are sure he is bought out by the company. How could he hold his job if made a defense of the braceros? We come and go like the wind. They stay."† One pair of braceros who did see an inspector reported their experience:

> Our camp [of perhaps two hundred men] was without water for a week. There was one water line and the pump broke. There was a small, rusty pipe that brought enough water for washing the hands and face but we could not wash our clothes and take a bath for a week. An inspector came. I do not know who told him. He came in the morning and he saw the conditions. He shook his head and talked in English to the cook as if he were very mad. So he ordered that the pump be fixed right away. And it was. The next morning we had water for the clothes and for the baths. The inspector also ordered that some cleanliness should be made.

* Forty-five days—or six weeks—was the minimal contract period, but workers were often held over after their contracts expired. One group of workers reported, not atypically, being detained for seventeen days after their contract expired and being required to undertake a third picking in tomatoes, even though the pay for this work barely exceeded their expenses. Most workers simply wanted to go home. Notes, "Two Natls—Rudy Avila Camp—Patterson," October 10, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

† "Of 345 Nationals interviewed in four and a half months, only two stated that they had either seen or heard of a housing inspector in their camps." Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 26–27; as one interviewee said: "Nobody in this group has ever seen an inspector in the camp. . . . But maybe we do not know what the inspectors look like. You can't tell when you have never seen something. If they have inspectors they should speak in Spanish and they should have a meeting with the men and not just with the foreman and the contractor." Notes, "8 Natls—Tracy—Julian Ramirez Camp," Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

> The contractor put a man to sweep the camp and he did this for three days. Then he went to do something else. Now the bath and wash water is pumped out a big hole that is always [f]illed and it flows in a ditch right between our bunk houses. It smells very bad in the hot weather. We thought the inspector should not let this condition continue either. It seems the contractor is not too afraid of the inspector. Maybe there is not a fine for doing this.[35]

Violations of the labor camp law were common. Workers in Terminous, in the San Joaquin Valley asparagus district, reported that there were only 3 showers for 150 workers and hot water was available only 1 day a week. "In this camp," however, "it is necessary to take a bath everyday because the soil is black and sticks to the skin. It is the best soil for the asparagus but it is not the best soil for the skin of man."* At another camp of eight hundred men, the shower was only open one hour a day until workers threatened to quit work unless it was open all day. Others talked of how "the toilets stink pretty badly and in the hot weather we had to go somewhere else." One group of workers was housed in a barn, out of which the cows had only recently been moved. "I would say that it is the purpose of the rancher to move the cows back into the stable as soon as we have finished the work because he keeps some of them in the yard in front of our dormitory." For this worker, the overwhelming sensation was of "fresh cow smell" and the odor of "Flit," a powerful insecticide the farmer had used after mucking out the stables.[36]

Administrators of the bracero program admitted that they could inspect only "a small percentage of the thousands of housing units in California where Mexican workers are lodged during part of the year"—the number of inspectors in California's DoH and the number of field representatives (compliance officers) in the BES were just too few—and that there was no doubt that bad conditions existed in some camps. But this inability was seen as an excuse rather than a handicap. "Certainly no one would suggest that we or any other reasonable Government agency would permit housing conditions such as [Galarza] describes to exist," the BES wrote in response to *Strangers in Our Fields* (see chapter 9), "*if they were known*. The point is that we often do *not* know they exist." The BES admitted that this lack of knowledge was in fact a telling criticism, but one strongly mitigated by the fact that "the author does not tell us *where* the housing which he describes so vividly is located." In other words, the burden for

* Workers in this camp also complained that the mattresses had not been cleaned after the previous year and that they were allotted only one old, tattered blanket each. Workers who complained about any aspect of the camp were penalized by having their blankets confiscated and were forced to try to stay warm by rolling themselves up in their soiled mattresses.

exposing violations lay with critics of the program, not the operators of it, who could hide behind their pleas of ignorance: they could not be held responsible for conditions if they were not aware of the bad housing, or even the existence of some of the camps, some of which "entirely escape our detection, and where quick-harvest crops are concerned . . . may escape detection of the [California] Department of Employment and the Division of Housing."[37]

This is an odd defense. Before they could receive braceros, growers associations, individual employers, and their contractors had to fill out form ES-367, detailing the location of their camps and verifying that minimum standards of housing and sanitation were met. In other words, BES staff had a record of all legitimate camps, and so no "detection" should have been necessary. If there were camps to be "detected," they were *already* in violation of regulations. Their mere existence meant growers were in violation of the rules governing the program. It is also odd because, that fact notwithstanding, only a few months before the BES's defense against the charges in Galarza's exposé, A. J. Norton, second in command at the San Francisco office of the BES, had reminded FPS field staff that the Department of Labor had "ultimate responsibility" for assuring that minimum housing standards were met by employers of Mexican National labor and that "in order to carry out that responsibility we must make initial and periodic inspections of *all* facilities in our areas which may be used to house Mexican workers." He instructed field representatives to "develop plans to assure coverage [inspections] of all housing facilities."[38]

Norton's memo was in part a response to increasing pressure on the USDL from unions and activist groups (itself in part a result of early word of Galarza's soon-to-be-published exposé), and in part a function of internal concerns about maintaining the legitimacy of the bracero program in the wake of Operation Wetback, an operation that had been promoted as a means to significantly combat the "evils"—such as poor housing, labor law violations, declining wages, and so forth—attendant upon use of undocumented labor. As the USDL, working in tandem with DoH, began to step up enforcement of compliance with the legal and regulatory requirements of the program, especially for housing, growers at first called for more DoH inspectors. "As you are aware," Ivan Wood, president of San Diego Farmers, Inc., wrote to Governor Knight, "the number of contract Mexican Nationals used in California has increased yearly," and especially in the wake of Operation Wetback. "This will add to the workload of the California Division of Housing. From our viewpoint, it appears that the districts, or areas, assigned to individual housing inspectors are too large for prompt certification. . . . An adequate budget should be provided and necessary

personnel hired to promptly carry out the duties of the Division of Housing in California."* Wood was seconded by the managers of a number of other growers associations, and Knight asked the new director of the DIR, Eugene Webb, to consider the matter. Yet the number of inspectors was never appreciably increased during the Knight administration.[39]

Whatever the promises of Operation Wetback, in other words, its effect in terms of living and working conditions for legally contracted braceros (much less domestic workers) was negligible. In addition to the practices of transfer and repatriation of workers who dared to complain, frequently bad housing conditions, complaints about lack of access to and support from the consul, and the constant work stoppages braceros had to engage in to achieve even minimal recognition as workers with rights, wage chiseling was common, as were short work days and generally awful food. As Galarza wrote, quite accurately, in *Strangers in Our Fields* (first published in July 1956), "in almost every area covered by the International Agreement, United States law, state law, and the provisions of the work contract, serious violations of the rights of Mexican nationals were found to be the normal pattern rather than the exception."[40]

If Operation Wetback did little to alter the status quo, Galarza's *Strangers in our Fields*, by contrast, hit a raw nerve and, together with stepped-up union activity, quickly induced some major, if contested, temporary, and partial administrative changes as the USDL's BES and the California Department of Employment's FPS found themselves on the defensive, scrambling to find ways to justify what *Strangers* exposed to be the *normal* exploitation at the heart of the whole program, while also shoring up practices—ranging from contracting procedures to the preparation of food, from labor camp inspection to the certification of need—that *Strangers* and other muckraking accounts showed to be so deficient.[41] But this defense, and these changes, though again to some degree

* In addition to labor camp inspections, tenement inspections, inspections of housing in unincorporated areas, and other duties, DoH inspectors had recently been assigned the task of inspecting plumbing in trailer coaches (RVs), adding to their already unreasonable workload; see O'Connor to Knight, July 9, 1956, Knight Papers, Series 92, Box 32, File 8. The unreasonableness of DoH inspectors' workload, and its deleterious effects on conditions in which farm workers lived, was diagnosed several years earlier, but little if anything was done to correct the problem. See Haslett to Collins, "Proposed Revision of Program of Division of Housing, Department of Industrial Relations," June 29, 1950, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2299; Small to File, July 5, 1950, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717; Samuel Wood, "Administrative Analysis of the Division of Housing, California Department of Industrial Relations," typescript, October 23, 1950, Taylor Papers, Carton 41, File 15.

contested by growers, would be implemented largely *in concert* with them,* as both the bureaucrats of the program and the growers who benefited from it, and who organized their growing in the expectation of the program always being there, sought to protect it from political assault. Shifting their stance on "wetbacks" had not proved quite enough to fully reinforce the status quo. Other moves would be necessary.

* My conclusion here is at odds with that advanced by Calavita in *Inside the State*. She argues that while frequently attentive to the needs of growers, the USDL was more often attacked by growers than cultivated by them. By contrast, in the wake of Operation Wetback, the INS was very much a growers' agency. Calavita is correct that the INS in general was the agency growers turned to most strongly when they sought to mold the program in their interests. But she underplays the degree to which growers simultaneously attacked and cultivated the USDL, and in doing so underestimates the importance of that agency's attempts to negotiate the contradictions of its position (which she outlines so well) in shaping the program over the course of its career.

State

Capital's Foremen

IN DECEMBER 1958, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Mervin McLain appeared before the California State Chamber of Commerce and presented a talk on "the role of the government as the hired hand on the farm." In her analysis of the complex role of the state in immigration policy during the bracero era, *Inside the State*, Kitty Calavita comments: "Though vivid, this 'hired hand' analogy is misleading." Her argument, much of it valid, is that at both the level of individual departments and agencies and at the level of the state as a whole, pressures on the state are too diverse, internal logics too entrenched, and an "agency's *own* bureaucratic interests" too important for anything like a "hired hand" relationship to develop between the state and capital. Throughout her book, Calavita makes it clear that the INS (and to some degree the USDL) "used its extensive powers to the advantages of growers," but in dismissing the "hired hand" analogy and calling for a close analysis of the actions and activities of policymakers, she does not advance another, more convincing reason for *why* an agency's own interests so readily aligned with capital's. It's as if it's mere coincidence. No doubt, as Calavita argues, state agents' and state agencies' interests are "not always parallel" to those of their primary clientele—the BES and FPS with bracero users, for example. But the alternative to parallel is not only orthogonal; it might be *interwoven*, or *imbricated*, or *enmeshed*, any of which will create a *bond* between strands that is stronger than its elements.[1]

The focus on the micropolitics of bureaucracy (a focus hardly unique to Calavita: it is by now nothing less than a preoccupation of state theory these days) leaves wanting a theory of power, and especially a theory of the relations of power that create the *structural position* of bureaucratic agencies—*and their employees*—in the political economy, much as Calavita would like to question this. Her argument that we need to find ways to "incorporate in our analyses both social structures and the political actors who are situated within those structures" leads in the right direction but is radically incomplete because it provides no hints about how structures (what, like determinations, Raymond William might call "pressures and limits") actually work. Indeed, she denies they do, arguing that "structures don't act, people do." But this hobbles her analysis. Throughout her book, Calavita consistently invokes abstract structures ("capi-

talism") whenever she wants to understand the *general* tendencies of agencies to vouchsafe the interests of growers, without ever inquiring precisely *how* those structures operate. In essence, she takes them for granted. At the same time she "pluralizes" the state, claiming that while its actions must be at times coordinated, they are in no sense "monolithic." But all this accomplishes in the end is an "adding in" of difference to what she calls a "dialectical-structural model" of the state. The degree to which adding in difference really leads to a conceptualization of the state different from pluralist or interest-group theories of the state is debatable.[2]

A focus on the structural *imbrications* of the state—understanding its structural position within the political economy—does not require ignoring the specific actions and ideologies of key players as well as low-level workers within the state; indeed, it necessitates an even closer focus on their actions by insistently raising the question: *why* have the state agents acted the way they have?

Nonetheless, Calavita is definitely right that the "hired hand" metaphor is too limited for understanding the actions of the state in California during the bracero era. This is not only because, as any amount of scholarship over the last generation has shown, being a "hired hand" never means that one is *merely* at the whim of the employer: even under quite oppressive conditions workers impose their will on the work process, seeking to make room for their autonomy on the shop floor or in the field—braceros *did* lay down their tools and refuse to work; braceros and domestic workers *did* slack off on the job; they all employed all those "weapons of the weak" we have come to celebrate in the absence of anything that looks like effective class struggle. To be a hired hand is not to be an automaton (even if it is to name the limits of one's autonomy). It is also because the historical geography of the bracero era in California suggests a perhaps better metaphor is required for describing the relationship between the FPS, the BES, and the growers of California, one particularly apt given the industrial (and as the CCIH called it, Fordist) nature of agriculture in California.[3]

That better metaphor is that agencies like the FPS and BES—and even DoH—performed the function, and occupied the *structural position*, of *foremen*: never independent (always imbricated), but given some degree of freedom in determining conditions of work and the labor process. Foremen can and do act; foremen can and do behave with great initiative; foremen can and do respond to needs and pressures from below, often adjusting their modes of operating accordingly. Never totally independent, foremen are expected to *implement* and *enforce* the specific practices and conditions of work; they are managers of the system. They are in a crucial position: foremen must implement the means by which capitalist accumulation can proceed, while also securing both their in-

dividual and their institutional legitimacy against pressures and contradictions from both above and below. They must manage the contradictions that invariably arise in the capital-labor relation, always seeking resolutions that promote continued accumulation and maintain legitimacy (force is not absent from this latter task). The nature of the pressure (the degree to which the foreman must accede to the demands of the workers, for example) is a function of ongoing struggle, and therefore of the historically developed and always changing relations of power between capital and labor.[4]

Seeing the BES, FPS, and other agencies involved in California agriculture in general and the bracero program in particular as "foremen" clarifies the nature of the agencies' "*own* bureaucratic interest[s]" (even if it does nothing to explain how they came to occupy these roles). The interests are a function of a need to negotiate that knife edge between "the people whom we are serving" (as Edward Hayes—the chief of an agency whose official charge was to assure farm workers received work—was soon to describe the growers of California) and the people the agencies are *managing*. As the FSA found out so quickly in 1943, if they failed to properly serve the one side—if they failed, as with the FSA, to properly subordinate themselves to the owners of capital—then it doesn't matter (much) how well they manage the other. Nor do their own bureaucratic interests matter a great deal if the power of their "bosses" is strong enough. The way to assure success, in this position, is therefore to totally imbricate "own interests" with those of the bosses—or the clientele, if that language is more comfortable—while maintaining a degree of legitimacy among the workers they must manage. The FSA had a great deal of the latter, but did a poor job with the former. It was eliminated—fired, as it were—as the manager of the bracero program. BES, working with FPS, did a much better job than the former, but as we will see in the following two chapters, in doing so both agencies steadily saw their legitimacy among workers and their advocates eroded, making it harder and harder for them to successfully implement, manage, and enforce the desires of the purchasers of labor power—both domestic and imported.

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CHAPTER NINE

RFLOAC

The Imbrication of Grower Control

ARGUMENT: That the remarks of braceros interviewed by the author and quoted in this chapter "show a common pattern of consistent violation of their rights." (page 19, paragraph 4)
REBUTTAL: The only logical conclusion which can be drawn from the statements quoted by the author is that they showed a common pattern of *alleged* violation. It is our experience, moreover, that the kind of vague, generalized statements used by Dr. Galarza to support his conclusion *will not bear up under investigation*. Much is made, here and elsewhere in this study, of the fact that workers whom he interviewed were assured that nothing they said would be disclosed to third persons. The purpose of this precaution was to encourage the worker to speak freely. While this is generally speaking a good investigative technique, we think it quite probable that the author received many complaints *because* of this approach. Quite often it is not fear of reprisal that inhibits a worker from making complaints to Government representatives, but rather a sense of both moral and legal *responsibility* for what is alleged.

Region X, Regional Office, Bureau of Employment Security,
"A Report on Strangers in Our Fields," 1956

Mr. Larin emphasized that the standards issued by the Secretary of Labor are "not without support." He cited the recent report to the President on Domestic Migratory Labor, which contains detailed recommendations on housing.

. . . Mr. Larin stated that the Department does want to apply "the rule of reason" in the entire administration of the Foreign Labor Program. If members of the National, Regional or Field Staff take excessive action, they will be corrected by their superiors. He believes an amicable solution to present difficulties is possible and preferable to the use of "threats" which would force the Department to defend itself. . . .

Mr. Yost inquired why the Department of Labor issued the [housing] standards without consulting in advance with its National Agricultural Advisory Committee or with RFLOAC in this Region. . . .

Mr. Larin stated that in using hindsight it probably was a mistake not to consult with such groups.

Regional Foreign Labor Operations Advisory Committee,
Minutes, Meeting 13, February 1, 1957, pp. 6–7

IN 1954, AS OPERATION WETBACK moved into high gear and the number of braceros imported concomitantly increased, the compliance staff in Region X of the BES (covering California, Nevada, and Arizona) was decreased from 14 to 12. It jumped back up again to 15 in 1955 and 16 in 1956, before dropping down to 13 in 1957. With a newfound commitment to compliance in the program beginning in 1958, the number of officers increased to 20 in 1958, 22 in 1959, and 24 in 1960. Compliance staff was "directly responsible for enforcement of and punitive action against employers who will willfully violate the laws and regulations of the Mexican National program." In addition, these same officers were responsible for inspecting payrolls, housing (primarily after 1957), feeding facilities, and, after 1959, short-haul transportation; validating grower reports of "skips" (braceros who skipped out on their contracts); contract extensions; and recontracting duties for 200,000 or more Mexican Nationals in the region at any one time. As a fact-finding committee of the California Senate concluded in 1961, the number of compliance officers in the region, even after the increases beginning in 1958, "is still far short of that necessary to accomplish a minimum accurate job." Indeed, work by most compliance staff, most of the time, must have been cursory at best. In 1956, *in California alone* 16 Region X staffers conducted 808 investigations of violations in response to complaints and 616 inspections. By 1960, 24 officers were conducting 1,139 investigations following complaints (an increasing percentage of which were made by the officers themselves) and 11,069 inspections (table 9.1).[1]

Even with its minimal compliance staff of thirteen in 1957, the Region X BES, probably reacting to the charges in *Strangers in Our Fields*, felt compelled

TABLE 9.1 Bureau of Employment Security, Region X Compliance Staff, California Investigations, and California Inspections

Year	Region X Staff	California Investigations	California Inspections				
			Housing	Payroll	Food	Transportation	Total
1956	16	808	317	299	N/A	N/A	616
1957	13	897	2,929	764	N/A	N/A	4,944
1958	20	981	2,558	3,263	718	N/A	6,539
1959	22	1,242	2,431	2,822	998	263	6,514
1960	24	1,139	2,807	4,594	1,771	758	11,069

Source: Report of the Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, *California's Farm Labor Problems* (1961), tables 56, 57, 93.

to implement new housing standards, and to be able to "defend itself" against growing pressure from "public groups . . . interested in this matter."* On December 26, 1956, BES issued new housing standards to all employers associations and individual employers who hired Mexican Nationals. The circular announcing the standards reminded growers that providing adequate lodging (which "shall include blankets when necessary, and beds or cots, and mattresses when necessary") was a contractual obligation on employers of braceros. The new procedures, however, substituted employer self-reporting of compliance for direct inspection by BES compliance staff. Now BES was to certify compliance on the basis of an inspection of the form, rather than the camp. However, the circular promised that if minor problems in labor camps were identified, growers would be notified and given a chance to repair them. When the time allotted for the repairs had elapsed, BES staff would inspect the camp itself and if adequate repair had not been completed the employer's braceros would be removed "to other approved lodging" or reassigned, *or* the employer would have bracero certification revoked and not reconsidered until the camp was up to standard. If, again by the grower's account, there were major problems, the workers were to be removed (and reassigned as above) immediately; if no adequate alternative housing was available elsewhere or the workers could not be reassigned, they were to be repatriated. If, finally, growers reported problems so severe that BES compliance officers doubted the camp could ever be brought up to standard, workers would be removed and the employer decertified until a whole new camp was constructed.[2]

BES staff made their determination by inspecting Form ES-367 that employers had to complete for each camp expected to house braceros (a copy of the form was attached to the circular). Form ES-367 had to be approved before BES staff would process Form ES-366, which was the grower's request for Mexican Nationals and which led to the "certification of need." ES-367 asked basic information concerning the number and type of housing units (barrack, family, tent) and beds in each. It asked about the "facilities available" (single beds, bunk beds, cooking facilities, showers, baths, toilets, washing machines, sources of water, distance of toilets and privies from cooking and sleeping areas, etc.). Finally, it asked whether the housing had adequate roofing, fly-proof screening, and covered garbage cans, and whether sufficient blankets, cooking utensils,

* Four years earlier, Edward Hayes had admitted to the fact that not only was there little compliance with housing standards, but Farm Placement and BES staff were lenient in enforcement: "In some cases, we have waited as long as two years to have a farmer correct unsanitary conditions before taking steps to force a correction." *Brawley News*, April 18, 1953, quoted in Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 194.

mess kits, cooking fuel, and so forth were available. A brief outline of the standards was included on the form. The specific requirements for bed size, distancing, and numbers in a room, as well as what constituted acceptable numbers and locations for vault and flush toilets, showers, and wash basins, and how screening, lighting, and sewage and garbage disposal were to be handled were laid out in a second notice, "Minimal Acceptable Standards for the Housing of Mexican National Workers," attached to the circular. The camp manager was required to sign Form ES-367 under penalty of up to a ten-thousand-dollar fine or five years in prison for filling out the form fraudulently. Crucially, the new BES standards now clarified that "if in any respect State, county or local law or regulation provides a higher standard for housing or facilities than that established by the Secretary of Labor, such law or regulation shall prevail." The most stringent standards, in other words, would be the enforceable standards. Once ES-367 was filled out, growers had to secure the signature of the local farm placement representative or the employment service manager, certifying the "housing statement," but not necessarily the housing itself, had been "checked and approved."[3]

The new standards, the requirement that Form ES-367 be completed *before* Mexican Nationals would be certified, and the threat, however tempered, of increased inspection, enraged California growers. The California Farm Labor Association and the California Farm Production Association (two large Southern California growers associations) quickly resolved "that the regulations issued by the Department of Labor on minimum housing standards for Mexican National workers be immediately suspended in all points that are in excess of the requirements of the California Housing Code for domestic workers." J. J. Miller, the secretary of the California Farm Labor Association, forwarded the resolution to Governor Knight with an outraged letter protesting (inaccurately) that the BES was proposing to impose a fine of ten thousand dollars and a prison term of five years for violations of housing standards. "This provision," he wrote the governor, "along with the unreasonable requirements contained in form ES-367 are completely repugnant to the growers of California."[4]

The RFLOAC and the Defense of Grower Property and Prerogative

Governor Knight was not the only one who heard from Miller. So did Glenn Brockway, the regional director for Region X of the BES, and A. J. Norton, his second in command. Miller had their ear through his membership on the Regional Foreign Labor Operations Advisory Committee. Brockway was chair-

man, and Norton, vice chairman, of the grower-only RFLOAC. Responding to suggestions made by California growers at a Los Angeles meeting in September 1954, the formation of RFLOACs around the country had been recommended by national BES Director Robert Goodwin in the wake of Operation Wetback to better coordinate USDL dealings with growers as the latter were rapidly expanding their use of braceros.* Meeting between early November 1954 and the end of October 1957, the Region X RFLOAC was designed "to serve as a vehicle for exchanging intelligence between" growers and the administrators of the bracero program. In addition, the RFLOAC was established to provide representatives of a well-established (and statutory) USDL National Advisory Committee (that included representatives of labor) with "well conceived suggestions for changes or corrections of policies, or information as to operational deficiencies and weaknesses," to "appraise, thoroughly discuss, and make recommendations on the interlocked, yet administratively separate, operation of the USES reception centers (and migratory stations) and the USES regional operations office," and to "maintain a consistent and understanding relationship with the Regional Director and his Regional Farm Placement Representative about operations matters and problems, to the end that the advice and counsel could consistently flow between the Association Managers, Grower-Users and these officials." Finally, the RFLOAC determined that "the FUNCTION of the committee would be: To provide advice and counsel on foreign labor program operations, to the end that, generally, the foreign labor program will be so conceived and, specifically so administered as to be more effective, efficient, economical and acceptable." When John Earl, a growers association manager from the Redlands citrus belt, enthused that if the function of the RFLOAC was achieved, "it would be something that had not been accomplished in 12 years," Brockway responded, "That's our target."[5]

Besides Brockway and Norton, the committee was composed of four representatives from Arizona (two representatives of big growers and two of associations) and thirteen from California (seven representing big growers and six from associations). Each representative had an alternate who attended meetings if the representative was unable to (though it was not uncommon for alternates to attend whether their representative was there or not). Edward Hayes from

* Under oath several years later, Glenn Brockway contradicted the evidence of RFLOAC minutes (where he stated that growers had suggested the formation of the committee to Goodwin), arguing that to his knowledge the committee was not developed at grower suggestion. Deposition of Glenn E. Brockway, December 20, 1960, in the matter of *Ernesto Galarza v. Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation et al.*, p. 10, Galarza Papers, Box 40, File 5.

the FPS attended most meetings as a consultant—Brockway "considered me an advisor to it or something," he later testified.* Among the representatives and alternates were some of the most prominent names in California agribusiness: J. J. Miller, Bruce Sanborn (executive vice president of the DiGiorgio Corporation), Keith Mets from the Imperial Valley, Leland Yost from the Coachella Valley, Ivan Wood from San Diego Farmers, Inc., W. H. Gruenhagen from CalPak, and Hector Zamora, formerly USES compliance officer in the Imperial Valley and now the manager of a large growers association in Oxnard. Together they represented the big bracero users in the region.[6]

The RFLOAC was of dubious legality. The Wagner-Peysor Act (1933) prescribed that the BES was to be advised by councils made up of representatives of employers, employees, and the public. Any committee advisory to the Department of Labor was also supposed to be public not secret as was the RFLOAC until it publicly announced its presence in the form of a pamphlet in April 1957 (see below). Members of the RFLOAC seemed to understand its dubious legal status. Speaking under oath, Bruce Sanborn, for example, agreed that a committee "was set up . . . so that agriculture in California would be able to state its position on policies that the Bureau of Employment Security should follow," and that it was perfectly reasonable to exclude labor representatives "because organized labor does not represent agricultural workers. It is an unorganized field," while also maintaining: "I don't know whether there ever was such a group in existence, although I have heard references to those initials. To the best of my recollection, there never was officially any such group."†[7]

In private, Brockway was forthright about the exclusion of labor representatives from the RFLOAC and further argued that "a similar committee such as this, but composed of representatives of Labor, would not be purposeful." He maintained (in the words of RFLOAC minutes), "While labor has a legitimate interest in policy matters relating to the importation of supplemental foreign labor, and the use of domestic labor, their interest is not believed to extend to ad-

* In 1958, NAWU sought to make a political cause of Hayes's role as "consultant" to the RFLOAC. In a press release it argued that RFLOAC members were some of the staunchest supporters (through the Farm Bureau Federation) of Right to Work legislation in California, and thus Hayes—who as director of the FPS was charged with assuring full employment for domestic farm workers—was complicit in its promotion in rural areas of the state. NAWU, "For Release, Monday June 23, 1958," Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 10.

† Testifying under oath some years later, Edward Hayes also claimed that "Goodwin never recognized it [RFLOAC] . . . and after a little while they told Brockway it was an improper, unofficial committee and should be disbanded." Deposition of Edward F. Hayes, January 22, 1963, p. 14.

ministrative or operating problems involved in dealing with the foreign worker, once he has been contracted under the policies set forth in the International Agreement and Work Contract, in that this Committee's functions extend to operational considerations involving the use of Nationals of another country, and not domestic workers of this country." When Sanborn "inquired whether this would be Mr. Brockway's answer to Labor, if this question were by chance raised, . . . the Chairman replied in the affirmative."*[8]

For administrators in the BES, as for growers and association managers, Brockway's arguments made clear bracero workers were never anything *more* than labor power, a resource to be delivered and deployed as efficiently and economically as possible. In this light, the creation of the RFLOAC made perfect sense, as did Brockway's argument that not only should representatives of workers have no place on the committee, but neither should representatives of the Mexican government. Once the terms of the standard work contract had been determined through diplomatic negotiations—once, that is, the terms of the sale of Mexican labor power had been settled—Mexico had no further interest in the efficient or acceptable *operation* of the program, excepting, perhaps, some degree of oversight as to whether the terms of the sale were being honored. The contractually provided-for access of the Mexican consuls, together with the Joint Determination process for adjudicating violations, presumably satisfied that interest. In this sense, BES was not a public agency, as that term is usually used, but rather an agency whose main purpose was to serve agricultural interests in procuring labor in a manner "acceptable" to growers.[9] Even if its mandate was somewhat narrower, the RFLOAC was little different in this regard, at least, from the old FPC set up by Governor Earl Warren during World War II.†

It did not take long for the RFLOAC to prove its worth—to begin meeting its "target" of seeing that there was a "more effective, efficient, economical and acceptable" administration of the bracero program. J. J. Miller's entreaties to Governor Knight about the unreasonableness of the USDL's new commitment to enforcing housing standards seemed to have provoked little response (even though Knight was typically well attuned to the concerns, and the political

* Indeed, Brockway stuck to this answer in a 1960 deposition, adding to it that there was no need for labor representation because both the international agreement and the standard work contract "specifically provide that no party could change the stipulations of that contract or agreement, except as such agreements were reached between the sovereign governments." Deposition of Glenn Brockway, December 20, 1960, p. 18.

† The presence of Edward Hayes in both organizations is one sign of the continuity between them. Hayes got his start as an administrator of California agricultural programs as a staff member of the FPC.

power, of agriculture). But Miller's and others' work in the RFLOAC—complaining about a lack of consultation and the departure from the "rule of reason," objecting to the rule that the most stringent of local, state, or national standards would apply—led, by the end of March 1957, to the revision of the newly announced standards.[10]

At one level, it is hard to understand why growers were so incensed by the new standards introduced at the tail end of 1956. After all, one of the primary reasons they were introduced was to eliminate a standing requirement (albeit one often honored in the breach) that all housing for Mexican Nationals be inspected prior to occupancy. Now the Department of Labor would rely on self-reporting by growers and limit itself largely to two functions: calculating camp capacity and informing the DoH when occupancy was proposed for camps housing five or more workers (over which the Labor Camp Act was in effect). One reason for grower concern, of course, was that when undocumented workers were a larger component of the migratory stream, growers had become accustomed to almost no oversight. And in the immediate aftermath of Operation Wetback, as the intervention of San Diego's state representative into the work of DoH showed, regulatory agencies "lean[ed] over backwards" to accommodate growers as they came in from the cold. Now they seemed to be pulling back. The other, probably more important, reason was that the new regulations shifted power, if only minimally, from growers to the bureaucrats who were there to serve them. The requirement that, under a penalty of a large fine or a jail term, growers truthfully report the conditions in their camps meant that administrators could, if they so wished, relatively easily if selectively enforce compliance with housing regulations. In the days of direct inspection, camp operators knew that chances of being caught out were exceedingly slim.[11]

More specifically, representatives to the RFLOAC objected to the December 1956 regulations on three major grounds. The first, as we have seen, was the provision that the most stringent of local, state, or national standards was to apply. The second was that the new rules required compliance officers to reject Form ES-367 "if the information given by the employer indicated that the facilities do not conform with the minimum acceptable standards . . . or if there is question to such conformance." Without an approved ES-367, growers were ineligible to receive braceros.* The third ground on which growers objected to

* There was an exception that should an employer state "that he has immediate plans for correcting the deficiencies," the employer could simultaneously file the ES-367 and request "an inspection of the facilities and approval of his plans," including a timeline, for improvement. Once such an inspection and approval was made, ES-366 could be filed and the request for braceros forwarded. Note that there was no requirement that the plans be carried out in or-

the new policies was that they placed the onus of maintaining a camp up to standard on the growers, with less responsibility assigned to the workers. "The responsibility for maintaining housing facilities in accordance with the minimum standards," the regulations read, "is the employer's. The Mexican worker should be urged to cooperate in keeping his living quarters clean and sanitary."[12]

Following entreaties from RFLOAC members, and the BES's admission at a February 1957 RFLOAC meeting of its "mistake" in not consulting with growers' organizations and RFLOAC representatives before issuing the new procedures, the housing standards were revised. The statement informing growers that the most stringent of local, state, or federal standards would prevail was eliminated altogether.* The second major change was to implement an appeals procedure if growers (by their own admission) were found by a compliance officer to be failing to comply with standards. Instead of the ES-367 being rejected or growers being required to file plans for improvement, now, "after examination of his housing facilities, or his statement of housing facilities in which he houses or proposes to house Mexican workers, an Employer shall be given a written statement indicating the respects in which the facility is deficient in meeting minimum standards." In receipt of this written statement, the employer could file an appeal within five days to the regional director of the BES "for a review of the findings." (The regional director could lengthen the appeal period to ten days if "the circumstances so warrant.")† If the regional director upheld the findings of his staff that there were deficiencies needing to be corrected, then the employer had a further five days to appeal to the national office of the BES for action by the secretary of labor. This process was designed to take weeks, and could take months, during which time certifications for braceros could continue to be processed, workers could be delivered to the (substandard) camp, and those already living there could continue to do so. Under the new standards, the only ground for removing workers from a camp (or not certifying it for occupancy) was if it was found by the "Regional Director to be an immediate hazard to the safety or health of the worker." Under the December 1956 standards, workers

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der to receive imported workers, nor were there systematic provisions for postimprovement inspection. Campbell to All Division Offices, Division Notice 1768 Q, January 9, 1956, Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3.

* It is not clear if the *standard* was in fact eliminated; rather, *notice* of it was. The effect was to turn a blind eye to the standard.

† That the inclusion of an appeals process was at the behest of growers is confirmed in Charles V. Shuman, president of the Arizona Farm Bureau Federation to James P. Mitchell (secretary of labor), February 19, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 48, File 8.

could be removed if a camp was not "adequate and hygienic," a much less stringent requirement.[13]

Not insignificantly, the March revisions also shifted much of the onus for maintaining livable camps onto the Mexican National workers. Where before employers were specifically held responsible for good camp conditions and workers were only to be "urged" to cooperate in maintaining facilities and hygienic conditions, now growers, while not entirely absolved of their ultimate responsibility for providing minimally acceptable camps, were given a means to assure compliance was the responsibility of the braceros. Now workers were not urged; rather, growers were required to inform workers they were "expected to cooperate in keeping [their] living quarters clean and sanitary." Furthermore, "the Employer may establish reasonable rules for the maintenance of clean and sanitary buildings and premises and for the conduct of workers on the farm, and workers have a duty to comply with such rules. Workers have a further duty to respect the rights and property of others and to exercise due care in the maintenance of the Employer's property especially those items which are furnished them in conformity with these housing standards." This statement might appear as mere rhetoric. In fact, it is more important than that. From the beginning of the program, growers complained that workers were not held accountable enough for growers' property and for the wear and tear they caused in camps. From the beginning of the program growers likewise complained that Mexican workers had no respect for, or even appreciation of, the good living facilities they were supplied, the mattresses and blankets they were provided, or the other benefits growers were required by the terms of the international agreement and standard work contract to provide. Under the new rules, they now had a means of compelling that respect and appreciation. Even more, they had a means of assuring that at least some, and maybe much, of the blame for deteriorated conditions in labor camps could be placed on the shoulders of the workers themselves. While growers had a "responsibility" for providing and maintaining facilities in accordance with standards, workers had a "duty" to comply with rules established solely by the grower (not only in the camp but "on the farm"—that is, the fields, the workplace), and to respect the growers' *property interest* in the facilities and supplies they were allowed to use.[14]

In other words, while Glenn Brockway argued at early RFLOAC meetings that once the sale of the Mexican labor power had been accomplished the only questions were ones of efficient deployment and use, in fact, what the RFLOAC was able to accomplish was a significant, and unilateral, alteration of the terms of the contract: new "duties" not specified in the standard work contract were introduced; grower responsibility for "comply[ing] with such housing standards

as may be prescribed jointly by the United States and Mexico" (as the standard work contract put it), was now officially ameliorated. The "rule of reason" now prevailed, at least from the perspective of the growers.[15]

RFLOAC: Strangers in Our Fields and PR in the Kitchens

The Department of Labor had introduced the December 1956 housing standards in part because the BES, especially in Region X, felt the need to "defend" itself from various public groups. The need for this defense was clearly a result of the direct hit at the heart of the program made by the pamphlet, *Strangers in Our Fields*, published in June 1956 by the U.S. Section of the Joint United States–Mexico Trade Union Committee, and widely distributed to media outlets, citizens' groups, trade unions, and politicians. Supported by the new Fund for the Republic, written by Ernesto Galarza, and based on his extensive field research in late 1955 and early 1956, *Strangers in Our Fields* was a damning account of the bracero program that showed not only that corruption (or at the very least questionable practices) was rife in the program, but that even when it was working *as it should* the Mexican National labor program condemned braceros to a state of perpetual unfreedom and functioned primarily to serve "the whims and demands of a nervous, sprawling industry."[16]

Strangers opens with an account of Pito Perez, a farm laborer from Michoacán, and follows him through the contracting process (complete with a listing of the current prices for purchasing the favors of various officials along the way) to the border "reception center" and on to a labor association's camp, from which he would be transferred to the camp of a "user-member." On this journey, Galarza makes explicit the economic incentives—or, rather, lack of economic opportunity—that guaranteed Mexican peasant participation in the program. After a brief survey of the origins of the program in World War II, Galarza explicates the formal rights guaranteed Mexican Nationals in the international agreement and standard work contract, arguing that the intent of both documents "was certainly not intended to exclude or limit the fundamental civil rights recognized in the Constitutions of both Mexico and the United States," nor of protections afforded in state law (such as those governing housing). Unlike other farm workers of the time, Galarza notes, braceros were also covered by a compulsory nonoccupational health insurance (paid for out of deductions from wages) as well as workman's compensation insurance for on-the-job injuries. Galarza concludes: "Thus the legal situation in which the bracero finds himself is probably unique among agricultural workers in the Western hemisphere. In theory, the civil liberties recognized by the Constitution of the

United States, the specific economic rights granted by the International Agreement and the work contract, the provisions of hard-won progressive state laws and the immediate obligations of private companies to attend him in sickness and disability, form a wide and solid base for personal security and individual dignity." The remainder of the pamphlet—more than sixty pages—is devoted to showing why this seemingly "solid base" was little more than a chimera.[17]

From housing, to wages, to weekly earnings, to the quality and quantity of the food braceros were served (and the practices of the concessionaires who served it), to record keeping, to the operations of bonus systems, to transportation to and from the fields, to on-the-job injuries, to the administration of the nonoccupational insurance program, to the roles played by labor contractors as "intermediaries" between the workers and their employers, to the practices of the FPS and the BES, to the chances a worker had of gaining representation from an elected *compadre* or union or receiving assistance from the Mexican consul, *Strangers* shows in detail just how the *ordinary* working of the program disempowered the bracero while exploiting him to the hilt.* Galarza shows how graft and corruption were endemic in the program, but not the essence of it; the essence, as he later put it, was "a system of economic and political power, not . . . the peccadillos of individuals who served it within the bureaucracy" or benefited from it in its fullness *as* a system. The fact that the program had become so systematically beneficial, especially in certain key crops, perhaps accounts for the rapid, and slightly panicked,† reaction *Strangers* called up.[18]

Claiming that it was full of "derogatory statements . . . contrary to fact"; that it impugned the good offices of the administrators of the program; and that it "reflect[ed] unfavorably and unjustly on the Mexican Consuls"; as well as objecting to the sponsorship by the Joint United States–Mexico Trade Union Committee, the Fund of the Republic, and *Commonweal* magazine (which had provided editorial support), the California State Board of Agriculture

* *Strangers* does not have much to say directly about the displacement of domestic workers, the negative effect it had on wages, and so forth, but the implication of the report—that the bracero program is *designed* to enhance the exploitation of farm labor power—is not lost.

† I say slightly panicked because in fact *Strangers* garnered less media attention than might be imagined. Few papers covered its original release. The *Los Angeles Times* reviewed the pamphlet, and the *New York Times* printed a short United Press notice of the report's publication but seemed not to cover it or the ensuing controversy. If NewspaperArchive is anything to go by (its coverage is somewhat spotty, tending toward smaller papers in California, and its search function not totally reliable), California papers paid the report no attention at all, with the exception of printing small notices of special State Senate hearings at which agribusiness spokespeople sought to defend their record. "Employers Accused: Mexicans in U.S. Are Said to Suffer 'Abuse and Injustice,'" *New York Times*, July 29, 1956, 13.

("appointed by the Governor to represent the California Department of Agriculture and the agricultural industry as well as to serve as the State Advisory Committee on Farm Placement to the California Department of Employment" and made up entirely of large, well-connected growers*) petitioned the labor secretary (with copies to Governor Knight, members of Congress, the Fund for the Republic, the Ford Foundation, and others) demanding "a well documented analysis and careful appraisal of the publications, *STRANGERS IN OUR FIELDS*." This September 17, 1956, petition came a little late. Eleven days earlier, Robert Goodwin had met in Los Angeles with Brockway and Hayes to discuss making a thorough rebuttal. Hayes claimed he was commissioned to undertake analysis and appraisal as a result of this meeting. "I had it investigated," he later said. "I had the documents proving the falsehoods and lies in it all prepared from the offices where his accusations took place, refuting his 'Strangers in our Fields.'" Hayes's goal was "to refute accusations made in [*Strangers*] against the Department of Employment and the people whom we were serving"—a frank admission of how the FPS saw its mission. Authorship of the report—prepared while Brockway was apparently out of the office on sick leave—was nonetheless attributed to "Region X, Regional Office, Bureau of Employment Security," not Hayes's FPS.† What is clear is that the report was prepared under the auspices and sponsorship, and at the behest, of the RFLOAC, and that the report benefited from "detailed facts which [the BES] could use in rebutting the statements in the report" collected from individual growers in an effort coordinated by J. J. Miller.[19]

While the California State Board of Agriculture had called for a rebuttal that would be widely disseminated, Brockway maintained that "A Report on 'Strangers in Our Fields'" was only ever "an internal document [that] had no official status," which "therefore could not be released as a public document." He also claimed that it was not even distributed to RFLOAC members. In fact, the report enjoyed a rather wide, if never fully public, circulation. Like *Strangers*, the "Report" was sent to members of Congress, citizens groups (in this case, farmers organizations), members of the Eisenhower administration—and to Frank Noakes, the chairman of the U.S. Section of the Joint United States–Mexico Trade Union Committee. Many of the copies had attached to them Representative Tom Werdel's old "Extension of Remarks" published in the *Congressional*

* At the time its roster included Frank Shay, S. V. Christierson, and others we have already had occasion to meet.

† Hayes later made his authorship emphatic: "I told you I made a report and submitted it to the Director, and that is it, apparently it." Deposition of Edward F. Hayes, January 22, 1963, p. 19.

Record in the midst of the DiGiorgio strike. Hayes noted that the "Extension of Remarks," copies of which had recently been provided to him by DiGiorgio's Bruce Sanborn, was included because it "will give you an insight into the person we are dealing with"—Galarza. The "Report" was considerably more restrained than Werdel's remarks (even if Hayes's private characterization was not: asked to characterize the "theme" of *Strangers*, he replied some years later, "The California farmers were a bunch of bastards, mistreating their workers, mistreating the nationals, underpaying them. There was nothing constructive about it").[20]

The "Report" sought to make an argument-by-argument rebuttal of *Strangers*. But it comes off not so much as a defense, as defensive. To Galarza's charges that many camps were substandard, the "Report" replied, "We would suggest that Dr. Galarza be asked, in the interest of the Mexican workers he so stoutly defends, to furnish us with the exact location of the inadequate camps which he visited. We will then do our best to match his zeal for justice." Similarly, on the question of whether braceros received lower wages than domestic workers: "If this occurs on the same job a violation is indicated. . . . If the author discovered apparent violation, it was his responsibility as an interested citizen to see that the proper authorities were notified." On the question of food quality, the "Report" later says, "We have no evidence that workers who complain about food have been sent to Mexico in violation of the Agreement, nor had the author produced any." But, in fact, the onus for producing such evidence was not on Galarza. In *Strangers* he had not said workers were definitely sent back, he had rather quoted two workers: "The little refrain you hear everywhere is that they will send us back to Mexico if we are not content with the situation," and "We talk among ourselves in camp but nobody would make a complaint for fear of being sent back to Mexico. When you are sent back you are sent in a hurry." Galarza's point, obviously, was not about the quality of the food or about specific workers being sent back, but rather about how the relations of power were *felt* by Mexican National workers *in relation* to the quality of the food. The "Report" addressed this issue, after a fashion, a few pages later. Responding to the allegations that "workers will not make complaints for fear of being sent back," the "Report" remarks: "It may well be that many workers fail to voice complaints because they fear their contract may as a result not be renewed, although this in itself would seem to indicate that the conditions about which complaints would otherwise be made are not as serious as Dr. Galarza would have us believe. In this connection, Dr. Galarza's own statement on page 66 (par. 1) that 'It is a rare national who does not wish his contract renewed,' is significant. In any event, the number of complaints which we receive from workers still under contract contradicts the author's statement." This is a remarkable argument and an indic-

ative one. *Since* workers do not complain for fear of being sent back to Mexico, the conditions about which they might complain cannot be bad; *since* workers want their contracts renewed, conditions must be pretty good; *since* some workers do indeed sometimes complain, whatever the pressures against doing so might be, then no workers feel pressure not to complain. Or, as the authors of the "Report" put it in relation to the question of low earnings for many Mexican National workers, "Perhaps the best measure of earnings is the happy faces of hundreds of *braceros* being repatriated at the end of their contracts. If questioned, the majority will openly admit to having saved considerable money and are grateful for the opportunity the United States has offered them."[21]

The final chapter of *Strangers* was entitled "The Bracero Himself," and in the words of the "Report," the chapter "paints a composite picture of the Mexican worker as a forlorn, pitiable, creature without friend or ally, in a strange country, among strange people who care nothing about his problems or feelings. He lives and works in an atmosphere of 'ignorance, prejudice and discrimination' (Page 80, paragraph 3), his future subject to the caprice and whims of unscrupulous employers." In fact, Galarza makes a fuller, and more subtle argument than that, an argument that gets at the difference between the bracero as labor power and the bracero as human being, and is worth quoting at some length:

> The braceros work in a foreign land, surrounded by strangers whose language they do not understand. They are totally unorganized—or more accurately, almost totally *dis*organized. The National may have ample grounds for complaint but he is accustomed to look around and measure the distance between him and the help he would need if his claim is denied and resented. He does not live shut up in camp by force. He is free to walk to town or to roam about the roads when he is not working. But he also sees that no outsiders come to visit him; that camps are heavily posted against trespassing; that the quiet talk of the camp quickly gets to the cook or the foreman; that consuls and inspectors are rarely if ever seen around; that on his occasional visits to town he is welcomed only by those who want him to spend his "cents."
>
> The distance between his camp and the surrounding community has to be measured not only in miles but in terms of vast differences in language, customs and outlook.

Galarza is here painting a picture about the conditions of work and life for a special kind of worker, not one of "a forlorn, pitiable, creature," but a worker not just disorganized but systematically robbed of the power to determine anything of the conditions under which he works. This worker "has heard foremen, contractors, and others deride the contract and laugh at those who held it in respect

and even awe." This worker had been contracted for forty-five days, though he has often been "held over" for the fifteen days the international agreement allowed beyond the contract period, maybe to be recontracted and maybe not. He is a worker that "even when work is slack . . . sees new groups of other Nationals arriving, and he knows that he must compete with them for jobs which are already scarce." To *this* worker, the "Report," in fact had no answer, though it did comment on the "necessity of painting, for the public and for Congress, an accurate picture of Pito Perez in the United States which would successfully put to rest the caricature of this and other writers [of] the 'bracero' program."[22]

USDL officers, growers, and their allies sought to apply their brushes to a number of canvases. Robert Goodwin wrote directly to Frank Noakes, who authored the preface to *Strangers*, complaining of distortions and inaccuracies. As a result, Noakes and the U.S. Section of the Joint Trade Union Committee made a "study of all the objections raised to make any corrections that proved warranted." He wrote in the preface to the second edition that "no substantial revisions were necessary," though a couple of paragraphs were added to the new edition conceding that one bracero-informant had made more money than he had reported to Galarza. Galarza had written that he had netted $6.85 a week for a six-week period. Department of Labor records confirmed this, but additional paystubs provided by the USDL (itself an extraordinary move given the number of times Galarza and others asked for and did not receive such information over the course of the program) showed the worker had made $788.69 over twenty-nine weeks—or an average of $27.20 a week, $4.53 a day, or 57¢ an hour (assuming six-day weeks, eight-hour days, and full employment over the whole period), hardly a sterling advertisement for the argument that braceros did not depress wages.[23]

As word of the BES "Report" leaked out, and as Goodwin made his defense to Noakes, USDL officials busied themselves parrying letters from knowledgeable critics like Frank Graham, chairman of the National Sharecropper's Fund. The officials complained that, among other things, Galarza "made no attempt to verify the information as factual," nor "request information from us nor seek to verify any of the statements contained in his study"—a charge of dubious validity: Galarza spent much time, in his role as labor organizer and researcher, both before and after *Strangers*, requesting exactly this kind of information from various federal and state offices (frequently being stonewalled for his efforts). Simultaneously, growers and their allies appeared before an interim committee of the California Senate, which held hearings in November 1956, to listen to various agricultural spokespeople refute the charges made in *Strangers*.[24]

As it defended the program the BES also went to work trying to reform the program, if in largely superficial ways. As we have seen, the first move was to

attempt to strengthen oversight of housing conditions, a perennial sore spot in California agriculture and one on which the program was especially vulnerable. Smarting from the reaction of the growers to this attempt, and from their reprimand at the hands of their self-picked RFLOAC representatives, BES managers sought, second, to work closely with bracero users to encourage some level of compliance with contractual obligations in the area of food. There was clearly money to be made in the feeding of braceros. The standard work contract stipulated that workers had the right to feed themselves (and growers had to provide the equipment to make this possible). But if the employer fed the workers, it was to be done at cost, with meal fees of no more than $1.75 per day deducted from the workers' paychecks. Since whether meal fees actually matched meal costs was never checked by program officials, the incentive was obviously to encourage workers to eat in camp commissaries. And winning the concession to operate the mess halls became, as Galarza put it in *Strangers*, "a profitable business, a lucrative sideline that impinges on the rights and privileges granted the workers by law," especially since the maximum meal charge came universally to be taken as the "standard deduction." Galarza further argued that the drive to procure *too many* braceros on the part of some employers was not only to drive down wages (in a piecework system, a large number of workers meant a rapid harvesting of the crop at an overall reduced wage bill), but also for the profit to be made on feeding them: though employers sometimes obeyed the rule that deductions for board could not be made if workers' weekly earnings fell below a threshold, "the general rule, particularly where labor contractors are involved in the management of kitchen and restaurant facilities, is that the cost of the meals is a first charge on the earnings of the worker, regardless of how low these may be."[25]

The BES countered, in its "Report," that Galarza's charges could not be true since the international agreement and standard work contract prevented profiting from food services, and besides, there were rules relating meal deductions to hours worked. Galarza, the "Report" averred, had built up his case "exclusively upon testimony of workers whose employers are unidentified"—this despite the fact that the BES itself had admitted in the past that employers had made illegal and excessive deductions for food. Further, it was argued that it was also the case that the Mexican Consulate, rather than employers, was the one who encouraged eating in camp restaurants "because it believes the worker is better fed than when he prepares his own meals." Nonetheless, in the wake of *Strangers* and mounting complaints about both the quality of the meals and graft within the food preparation system, the USDL pushed for a housecleaning. Indeed, at the same RFLOAC meeting where growers upbraided BES employees for not consulting them on the new housing standards, Keith Mets, represent-

ing growers in the Imperial Valley, "stated [in the words of the minutes] that there is a vicious circle in the Imperial Valley of food contractors offering rebates or kickbacks to growers. This," he continued, "cannot help but affect the adequacy of feeding. He believes that associations must take a strong position against such practices." The Imperial was not alone, of course. Even so, H. D. Huxley of the BES rushed to assure growers that "at this time the regional office does not wish to get into the question as to whether anyone is making a profit in feeding Mexican Nationals." The real question bracero-users needed to grapple with was whether or not "workers were getting proper food."[26]

Instead of addressing the "vicious circle" Mets identified, RFLOAC established a Feeding Committee to "study and prepare suggested procedures in the matter of feeding Mexican Nationals." The committee—members of which "each represented a maximum of sixteen years' experience and approximately 50 million meals feeding Mexican workers"—met once, deciding to collect "four or five two-week schedule menus from a cross section of the state" as a "fair guide in relation to types of meals being served." In late April 1957, the RFLOAC published a pamphlet that included these sample menus, together with a "Report and Preamble" of the Feeding Committee, written by its chairman, John Earl. In the preamble, Earl laid out what would now be called a set of "best practices" for feeding braceros. Food must be kept fresh, the preamble averred, and meals needed to "be pleasantly and graciously served in clean surroundings." "Color," he reminded his readers, "adds a great deal to its acceptance and appetite appeal. This is particularly true of Mexicans." While having a menu schedule was important, it was equally important to provide variety—"the element of surprise . . . where normally on a Tuesday certain food would be served, to change it without notice and give something in its place that has the above-mentioned qualifications of attractiveness." It was crucial that "Mexican" food be served (though supplemented with "other foods necessary to the diets of men performing physical labor" such as "milk, hotcakes, bread, puddings, fruit, eggs, meats, poultry, fish, and other nutritious foods, not regularly a part of their native diet"), and that it be prepared by cooks "skilled in preparation of *Mexican* foods." While mention is made of assuring clean and sanitary cooking and eating facilities, nothing is said about the terms of the work contract, including the stipulations that food be provided at cost or that workers must be allowed to cook their own meals if they so chose.* The implication of the pam-

* These are odd omissions, perhaps, for a report that the committee felt was "a comprehensive analysis of the feeding program currently being employed in a cross section of associations polled throughout the state."

phlet, though this is nowhere clearly stated, is that the included sample menus, all collected from growers associations, were ones that had been successfully implemented at a cost of no more than $1.75 per person.[27]

The RFLOAC "Report on Bracero Feeding Standards" was bound with an equally innocuous "Code for Foreign Labor Associations,"* which was the product of another hastily assembled RFLOAC committee, this one headed by William Tolbert, an association manager from Santa Paula. Most of the "Code" can fairly be described as a plea for associations to treat their workers with at least a modicum of respect, and to understand that a contented worker is often a more productive worker. There are also exhortations to association managers to make sure each association member is "conscious of [the] fact" that since the association as a whole is responsible for the conduct of its members, "any one member can throw the whole Association out of compliance and endanger the supply of men for the whole Association," and that it is necessary to settle differences with braceros before the end of the contract period and without the aid of governmental mediators. The "Code" ends with suggestions for further research on such matters as "work quotients" (using time and motion studies to determine optimal labor processes), "efficient design of new camps,"† better processes for record keeping, field sanitation, and means for establishing prevailing wage rates.[28]

Drawing up and publishing the RFLOAC pamphlet was obviously a public relations move‡—a softer and more public response to *Strangers* than the internal "Report"—and it was meant to be given "the widest distribution . . . to all farm-

* This was not the first time such a "code" was developed. Nor was it the first time that such a code was intended primarily for public relations purposes, as Varden Fuller shows in his analysis of the May 1937 document, "Farm Labor Policies Unanimously Adopted by the Agricultural Conference of Representatives of the Following Organizations: California State Chamber of Commerce—Agricultural Department, Agricultural Council of California, California Farm Bureau Federation, Associated Farmers of California, Inc., Farmers Union—California Division," in "Labor Relations in Agriculture, 1955," chap. 4 of Fuller, *Hired Hands in California's Fields*, 57–90, esp. 81–83.

† Only a year before the DoH had republished its comprehensive booklet, *Employee Housing: Minimum Requirements for Construction and Maintenance* (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1956), which included detailed blueprints for state-of-the-art camps, including camps for bracero workers. More research was hardly necessary.

‡ It was carefully noted on the inside cover that the pamphlet was "not printed or distributed at government expense." Unlike the publication of *Strangers in Our Fields*, the release of the feeding standards was covered in the California press. See, for example, "Harvest Hands Food Plan OKd," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, July 26, 1957, A5; "Seek Decent Feeding for Braceros," *Pasadena Star-News*, July 27, 1956, 10.

ers who employ or might employ Mexican Nationals," as well as to "other interested groups." On the first page of the pamphlet was printed a letter from Glenn Brockway, signing himself as "Regional Director and Chairman of RFLOAC," that opened: "Two and one-half years ago the regional office of the Bureau of Employment Security, U.S. Department of Labor, and leaders of the agricultural industry in California and Arizona agreed upon the formation of the Regional Foreign Labor Operations Advisory Committee. The primary purpose of the committee was to advise and assist this office and the State Employment agencies in the administration of Public Law 78, under which supplemental seasonal field workers are brought into this country from Mexico." This was the first public notice that such a committee existed. Curiously, given the injunction that the pamphlet be given the widest possible distribution, a copy did not reach the offices of NAWU until late December 1957.[29]

Early that December (perhaps working from a tip from a friendly employee in the California DIR), Galarza wrote the secretary of the RFLOAC asking for the food pamphlet and for copies "of any reports, proceedings, tables and other documents which your Committee may have distributed to employers or their associations." He closed the letter by inquiring whether labor organizations could join the committee. John Usher Smith, BES employee and secretary to the RFLOAC, responded on December 23, enclosing the "Report on Bracero Feeding Standards, Including Code of Foreign Labor Associations" together with a March 1956 BES document entitled "Region X Application of Prevailing Wages and Their Determination as Applied to Public Law 78, as amended," and a document detailing the division of labor between federal and state governments from October 1957. As to whether labor organizations could join, Smith wrote, "Inasmuch as the Regional Foreign Labor Operations Advisory Committee was formed for the sole purpose of providing a means whereby the Regional Director of the Bureau of Employment Security and contractors and employers of Mexican Nationals in this region might meet together from time to time concerning Region-wide operating problems relating to the Mexican National program, it would not be appropriate to add labor organizations to this Committee."[30]

Whatever Smith may have told Galarza, Brockway, Norton, and Huxley had, six months earlier, developed a rather different notion of what the role of the RFLOAC was to be. At the June 1957 meeting of the committee, Huxley informed the gathered representatives that the BES Regional Office had been reorganized. More training was being implemented for field representatives (compliance officers) and four new supervisory positions, called district supervisors, had been created. Overseeing the work of the compliance officers, the district

supervisors would be freed of much daily paperwork (e.g., inspection reports, the handling of ES-367s, etc.) so they could "concentrate on major problems and on supervision." Brockway added that this reorganization meant "some 'production' jobs (Field Representatives)" had to be eliminated but "that this would result in a net better job for agriculture and the Department." The reorganization also meant the new district supervisors could be "instructed to contact the RFLOAC members in their areas so that they might become better acquainted with them and utilize their services to the extent possible in bringing about a better understanding of the bracero program." To do this "net better job," Norton announced, the RFLOAC executive committee simultaneously "recommended that each RFLOAC member be assigned a group of associations and independent contractors in his area to whom he would report on discussion and actions that had taken place at RFLOAC meetings." Brockway suggested that members carry out their new duties by calling meetings of area associations and presenting highlights from RFLOAC meetings, or distributing the minutes to all associations' members. The reason for these new assignments, according to the minutes of the June meeting, was that "while RFLOAC has established its worth, to be fully effective it must become representative officially of all agricultural associations and farmers in Arizona and California which employ foreign labor. [Brockway] noted that the stature and success of RFLOAC relies not in its being a forum or sounding board but in being an intelligence medium for the entire agricultural industry and Government agencies involved. He believed that in this way the RFLOAC members could bring problems to the meetings which could be faced by himself and Mr. Norton before they were unnecessarily taken to Washington or grew out of proportion." With fewer officers, more supervisors, and better "intelligence," by fully imbricating the administrators of the bracero program with, as Hayes later put it, "the people whom we were serving," Brockway was sure the administration of the program in the interests of agriculture would take "a big step forward." The notion of "operating problems" developed by BES and RFLOAC seemed quite capacious indeed, extending all the way to figuring out how to run interference between the regional office and the Washington headquarters.[31]

But it was an imbrication that was not to hold, at least in this form. In February 1958, California Representative Jack Shelley wrote to the BES's Robert Goodwin (copying NAWU's H. L. Mitchell) saying he had recently learned of the existence of the RFLOAC and asking for copies of the minutes as well as "a brief description of [RFLOAC's] activity in the field of advising the Department of Labor on foreign labor." Goodwin responded ten days later, enclosing the minutes of the October 31, 1957, meeting, and stating the reason for the committee:

"Our regional office in California was the object of continual complaints from employers about some of the policies and regulations" governing the bracero program. The committee was "visualized . . . as a means of enlisting the support of the growers to assure better operation," and over the time of its existence, Goodwin wrote, "I believe it has been the medium through which we have secured greater cooperation from growers. . . . We know from experience in California," he concluded, "that unless there is an opportunity for employers to voice complaints through meetings with this Committee, we would be called upon to attend meetings called by growers themselves." Even so, "we do not anticipate this Committee will be meeting very often in the future. However we plan to continue to make use of it occasionally." When Galarza later wrote to request copies of all minutes, however, Goodwin noted the October 31, 1957, meeting had been the last, and "no [further] meeting is scheduled for the Committee is contemplated for the future." As soon as unions and union-friendly congressmen learned of it, in other words, the RFLOAC disappeared.[32]

This is not to say that growers were now without a means of making their views known to administrators. The intelligence network established among district supervisors and RFLOAC representatives at the June 1957 RFLOAC meeting was presumably still in effect. So too was a "custom" of farm placement supervisors and farm placement representatives meeting, and dining with, "the Employers" on the first day of the Annual Preseason Placement Training Meeting held each spring. Nor did it eliminate the BES's and the FPS's extraordinary ability to treat growers and representatives of labor in totally contradictory ways without, it seems, ever being able to see the contradiction. If, in March, Goodwin wrote blandly to Representative Shelley that without the RFLOAC, BES staff would be called upon to attend grower meetings, then in May, H. D. Huxley, in his capacity as acting director of Region X of the BES, could write to Galarza just as blandly saying that Field Representative Campos would not be attending a meeting called by NAWU because "considering complaints in open forums such as you suggest violates our investigation procedure."[33]

Entrenchment

Robert Goodwin had argued that he "authorized the establishment of the operations committee [RFLOAC] as an experiment to see what could be accomplished." When exposed, the experiment was quickly abandoned: its existence threatened to undermine the legitimacy of the BES in particular, and to erode further the legitimacy of the bracero program in general, given that it exposed just how fully the BES (and the FPS) worked *for* the growers. Shedding the

RFLOAC was not difficult now that its managerial functions had, through the reorganization of BES compliance operations and the development of a system of communication between the wider community of bracero-users and the BES *through* (now former) RFLOAC members, been both diffused and entrenched.[34]

This entrenchment came at a crucial moment. After several years in the wilderness of underfunding and shrinking staff (by 1954, Galarza was the only remaining paid employee in California, and his commission for *Strangers* was in part a means to find the money to keep him there), NAWU was poised to make a comeback—or maybe a last stand—in the struggle over the nature of the labor pool and control over the labor process. In the summer of 1957, a battle over who was to pick peaches in the "Peach Bowl" erupted north of Sacramento. As the following chapter shows, the battle brought out into the open not only the means by which the FPS and the BES were implementing the imperatives of capitalist farmers, but through that, issues related to the determination of wages, and especially what was aptly called "domination"—issues that struck right at the heart of the legitimacy of the bracero program and its overseers.

Domination

Of Labor, by Capital

WHEN WORKERS SELL THEIR LABOR POWER to a capitalist, they give up (most) rights to it. Such sales lead to what Marx called the *formal* "subjection of labour to capital"—a "result of the fact that the labourer, instead of working for himself, works for and consequently under the capitalist." As labor powers are combined—as workers work cooperatively under conditions where labor power is bought and sold as a commodity—"the sway of capital develops into a requisite for carrying on the labour-process itself, into a real requisite of production. That a capitalist should command on the field of production, is now as indispensible as that a general should command on the field of battle." And, of course, "the directing motive, the end and aim of capitalist production, is to extract the greatest possible amount of surplus value, and consequently, to exploit labor power to the greatest possible extent." But set against that aim and end is the fact that "as the number of the cooperating labourers increases, so too does their resistance to the domination of capital, and with it, the necessity for capital to overcome this resistance by counter-pressure." The *formal* subjection of labor—against all the resistance from labor to domination by capital—has to be turned into a *real* subjection: a world in which labor submits to its own formal subjection because it is in its own best interest.[1]

The conversion of formal into real subjection is a historical and ongoing process, not a once-and-for-all settled fact. It is a continuing struggle (in which the state has a vital and contentious role to play). Cooperating laborers *do* contest their domination by capital, even in the fields of California. Before World War I, the IWW made a point of contesting not just the real subjection of labor to capital, but the formal basis—the wage relationship—out of which this real subjection grew. Similarly the communist unions of the 1930s sometimes (though less consistently) questioned the wage-labor system, if more in their propaganda than their actual battles on the ground. But mostly, when farm workers have been militant—which, as Carey McWilliams reminded us, has always been a prerequisite for progressive transformation of the conditions of work and life—they have mostly focused not on abolishing the subjection of labor to capital, but the terms on which that subjection operates. The real subjection of labor to capital is all too real.

Even if it is only geared toward addressing the conditions of their subjection, growers nonetheless feel workers' pressure—"their resistance to the domination of capital"—and, more important, must continually address it. During the bracero era, the means of undermining resistance to domination by capital was through a process in fact called "domination." "Domination" had a specific, and as we will see restrictive, meaning during the bracero program. But the general idea is clear enough: domination was when braceros—a controlled, indentured labor force—not only predominated in the labor market (for an area or a crop), but in the process eliminated the possibility for domestic workers even to find work, to sell their labor power at all. Domination was (again as we will see) an *inevitable* result of the program as it was structured—it was written into the genetic code of PL 78 and the international agreements—that eliminated for a whole class of people the very possibility of selling their labor power, of submitting themselves to formal subjection. In the process, growers found they could, to a fairly large degree, eliminate a source of resistance to their total domination of the labor process. Workers, through their unions, thus found themselves in the not-uncommon position of fighting primarily for the right to be exploited. The real subjection of labor to capital was deepened. The "dull compulsion of economic relations" never relents, whether there are jobs available or not. Domination is a means not just of formal, and not even just of real subjection, but especially of wiping out the power of workers, whether organized or not. For many, mere survival becomes an end in itself. "What this has meant, besides low wages and high rates of exploitation," concludes Richard Walker, "is the untrammeled power of the agribusiness class over production, circulation, and politics."[2]

Walker's conclusion is grim, but justifiable. But it is neither historically inevitable (or invariant), nor a conclusion that was—or is—incontestable, not theoretically or empirically, but on the ground. Domination by domination during the bracero era has to be seen, despite its seeming inevitability, as an *achievement*. Galarza and NAWU understood this, at least partly. If, as was written into law, the bracero program could not have an "adverse effect" on domestic workers (again, we will see that this had a quite specific definition), then the only way to assure it did not was to eliminate the bracero program. That would eliminate the immediate source of domination, and maybe even tilt the field of struggle a little bit back in the direction of workers. But it would do nothing to address either the formal or real subjection of labor to capital: that could only be accomplished by attacking the wage relationship and the monopoly over the ownership of the means of production that are the basis of capitalist production—as Carey McWilliams clearly understood in 1939, when he wrote

that the "real solution [to the farm labor problem] involves the substitution of collective agriculture for the present monopolistically owned and controlled system. As a first step in the direction of collectivization, agricultural workers must be organized."[3]

Domination by domination made the organization of workers that much harder—it was precisely a means by which their organization was thwarted. Domination would have to be fought—the bracero program would have to be eliminated—if workers were to have a chance. But domination was not—could not be—the end, as it was only a means by which real subjection was entrenched. The problem, in other words, was not domination of crops or areas by braceros (as it was usually described); nor was it domination of labor markets by indentured braceros; nor was it, finally, the domination of domestic workers by imported ones. Rather, it was the domination of labor by capital. That was the nub of the problem.

What had to be attacked was the wage system itself. But that was just not on the table. Not only was NAWU, all things considered, a quite conservative, business-oriented union (and certainly a died-in-the-wool anticommunist one), but the very fact of real subjection's deepening entrenchment *through* the bracero program—through domination—made a radical contestation of the relations of production in the California fields seem a fool's errand. Short of that, though, there was much to be done.

CHAPTER TEN

Power in the Peach Bowl

Of Domination, Prevailing Wages, and the (Never-Ending) Question of Housing

On Friday, August 23, 1957, made a sick check on the Yuba Farm Labor Camp from 7:00 AM to 9:30 AM and found very little. There were few people about—identified only one group of Mexicans who were leaving on a truck. Generally people were scarce; talked to about six of them. . . . It was pretty awfal [sic]—at least to one not used to it. Edna's remarks were that there was obviously dysentery (she could smell it, also everyone we spoke to commented on it), almost every one had skin disorders (she noted no scabbies, etc. that was contagious), obviously malnutrition in the children and most adults, lack of hot water, poor drainage in the "general utility unit" . . . , garbage plots pretty bad, and millions of mosquitos [sic] and flies. . . .

We saw the Big Corral; while we were there (after making Sick Call) another truck load of Nationals arrived (estimated 60 to 75) and streamed in to the pen and the outside privy (many didn't bother to use the toilet facilities). And everyone says there are far too many people for the jobs all ready [sic].

Ann Hollingsworth, Public Health Nurse, April 23, 1957

Never have I observed more unsanitary conditions than did I in the several housing areas visited. More than 40 persons, including women and children, were, as of yesterday, sleeping, cooking and eating along the banks of the Feather River at Marysville and Yuba City. These people, most of whom are Negroes, had been living under these conditions for the past three weeks in some cases. The disproportionate number of Negroes living along the river is accounted for by the fact that the trailer camps and other privately owned housing operators have refused to accommodate them. These people have built makeshift stoves of rocks, oil cans, and any other materials available. Their beds consist of mattresses brought along from their homes.

. . . As soon as the peak picking period came, August 12, . . . the welfare aid was abruptly cut off. Wages depressed by the presence of imported labor made it impossible for most of the American pickers and their families to earn enough to sustain themselves, not to mention building up a reserve.

C. L. Dellums and Lester P. Bailey, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, August 29, 1957, to Vice President Richard Nixon

The peach harvest will have been completed before this letter reaches you. This will undoubtedly cause a sharp improvement in the unsatisfactory conditions which you describe.

Governor Goodwin Knight, September 12, 1957, to Bailey and Dellums

ON MAY 20, 1958, lawyer James Murray wrote to Edward Hayes requesting "copies of all the information you have compiled including statistical tables on crops and crop areas 'dominated' by Mexican nationals." Murray's letter followed up an earlier one from Galarza to the FPS, which had received no response. In turn, Galarza's letter followed one from Anthony Rios, of the Los Angeles chapter of the Community Service Organization (CSO) (which was beginning to undertake serious community organizing efforts in Mexican American communities), also asking for information about domination. Rios's letter had drawn a response from Hayes that was fairly remarkable in its assertions. Hayes first told Rios that what the letter was looking for was an "opinion" rather than the "factual information" the FPS was "desirous of giving." Next he argued that if Rios wanted information "that would assist your members in obtaining agricultural employment [something nowhere mentioned in Rios's letter], the information would not be pertinent as any job filled by a foreign contract worker represents a potential job for any qualified domestic worker." Instead, finally, Hayes sent Rios a Department of Labor pamphlet outlining domestic worker rights.[1]

Murray had better luck when he asked Hayes to either send the requested information to Galarza, care of the law offices of Markuse & Murray, or, if he was unwilling to, to "give me the legal authority upon which you base your opinion." FPS public relations officer James P. Bond responded within a week with the requested information (sending it directly to Galarza in San Jose rather than to Murray's office). From his letter it was clear that "opinion" had nothing to do with the determination of whether a crop or area was "dominated." The USDL had established very clear guidelines for determining domination by foreign contract labor: "a particular wage-finding class is considered dominated whenever the number of domestic workers in the wage-finding class is both less than 200 and less than 25% of the total domestic and contractual workers employed. (Note the significance of 'both.')" The "both" was indeed significant. In a harvest employing 2,000 workers, 89.9 percent could be braceros and the crop would not be considered "dominated." To provide an actual example, under this method the San Joaquin County tomato harvest (which required 10,300 workers in 1960) could be 98.1 percent Mexican Nationals and the crop still would not be dominated.[2]

Bond claimed the FPS did not have data for the full year 1957, which was what both Rios and Galarza asked for. It did, however, have data for September through December. Even by the restrictive USDL definition, Bond reported that during the period thirty-seven separate crop-areas were dominated (table 10.1).

Most of the dominated crop-areas were in the Southland, lending credence to NAWU's longstanding claims that the heavy importation of braceros into the southern part of the state was leading to massive displacement, especially since by 1956, braceros comprised half the peak labor force as far north as San Joaquin County. Even with the spotty data provided by the FPS, it must not have been hard for domestic workers and their advocates to see the scale of displacement at work. The lettuce harvest in the Imperial Valley, for example, required more than five thousand workers at its peak (weeding, two months earlier, required more than three thousand). If the Imperial County lettuce harvest was part of the Desert Area lettuce deal that was dominated, then *at least* 96.4 percent of the workers had to be braceros (if, instead, it was the San Bernardino harvest that was dominated, then domestic workers might have comprised as much as 18% of the workforce).[3]

TABLE 10.1 "Dominated"* Crops, September–December 1957

Desert Area	South Coast Area	Central Coast Area	North Coast Area	San Joaquin Valley	Sacramento Valley
Broccoli	Avocados	Broccoli	Apples	Celery	Melons
Cabbage	Beans	Celery		Lettuce	Seed crops
Carrots	Carrots	Lettuce		Potatoes	Tomatoes
Cotton	Celery	Misc. veg.		Asparagus	
Dates	Lemons				
Garlic	Melons				
Lettuce	Misc. veg.				
Misc. veg.	Olives				
Snap beans	Onions				
Squash	Oranges				
Sugar beets	Peppers				
Tomatoes	Sweet corn				
	Tomatoes				

Source: James W. Bond, California FPS, to Ernesto Galarza, May 26, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 9.

* "Dominated" crops are those crops in an area where there are fewer than two hundred domestic workers *and* they comprise less than 25 percent of the total workforce. NB: If a crop is listed above it was dominated in one or more counties in the region, but not necessarily in the region as a whole. Similarly, the length of time of domination during the season varied; not all crops were dominated all the time. Despite admitting to having county-level and time-specific data, FPS elected to report domination only at the regional level over the whole period.

Section 503: The Inevitability of Domination

The issue of domination was decidedly not just one of whether a domestic worker would be placed in a specific job at the expense of the bracero worker, as Hayes tried to suggest it was in his answer to the CSO's Rios (though, as we will see, even that straightforward replacement of one type of laborer with another was a deeply fraught and contested process). The question of domination was instead a systemic one, usually talked about in the language of "adverse effect." From the earliest days of the program, labor importation was allowed only if it could be guaranteed that there would be no adverse effect on the wages and working conditions of domestic workers. Also from the earliest days, investigations showed the various agencies charged with administering the program simply could not prevent adverse effects.* The inevitability of adverse effect and the inability of administrators to do anything about it was in many ways a function of a contradiction that sat right at the heart of PL 78. Section 503 of the law laid out the conditions under which Mexican National labor could be imported. It could be imported if the secretary of labor determined (1) there

* Professor B. H. Cocheron of the Agricultural Extension office in Davis warned the FPC of this in July 1945. FPC minutes, July 12, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733. The President's Commission on Migratory Labor's 1951 recommendation that the FPS of the USES have "no administrative responsibilities" in the bracero program beyond certifying need followed from the commission's finding that these agencies failed to properly protect the interests of domestic workers. President's Commission on Migratory Labor, *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 59, 66. Though it shies away from analyzing the administration of the program, a significant study focusing on Santa Clara County in 1954 showed conclusively that because of the bracero program "no general effort is being made to make seasonal farm work more attractive to citizen labor" and that "the deliberate planning efforts of farm employers, individually and as associations, is largely concentrated in developing and improving the Mexican National program." Fuller, Mamer, and Viles, "Domestic and Imported Workers," 7. In 1959, consultants to the secretary of labor showed that in the eight years since the passage of PL 78, the USDL had proved itself quite successful in obtaining Mexican labor for growers, but "much less successful" in protecting domestic workers from "adverse effects." "Mexican Farm Labor Program, Consultants Report," October 1959, DoH records, File 65 (copy printed as appendix G, exhibit 12, in California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 304–9). Building off the consultants' report, and supplementing it with a mass of testimony and statistical analyses, the California Senate Fact Finding Committee found an "innate proclivity of the Mexican National program to adversely affect the employment opportunities of domestic seasonal farm workers," among a host of other adverse effects. *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 119. See also Department of Employment, "'Dominated Area' and 'Dominated Crop Activities,'" November 12, 1959, attached to Department of Employment, "Mexican Nationals in California Agriculture, 1942–1959," November 2, 1959, DoH Records, File 66.

were not "sufficient domestic workers who are able, willing, and qualified . . . at the time and place needed . . ."; (2) importation would "not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of domestic agricultural workers similarly employed"; and (3) "reasonable efforts" had been made "to attract domestic workers for such employment *at wages and standard hours of work comparable to those offered to foreign workers*." As Ernesto Galarza pointed out, whatever the intentions of Clauses (1) and (2), Clause (3) all but guaranteed "adverse effect." Under this Clause, "protection for domestic workers was to be afforded by giving them an opportunity to accept employment" at whatever wages were being offered the captive force of braceros. If they did not accept such an offer, then, perforce, the provisions of Clause (1) were met. As domination of crop areas proceeded, Clause (2) was also met as there often were few, if any "domestic agricultural workers so employed." "The full force of adverse effect came into play," as Galarza put it.[4]

Consultants* appointed by the labor secretary in 1959 to address four major issues—whether bracero use caused adverse effects, whether their use should be allowed year round and in skilled or machine jobs, what the international relations implications of continuing or ending the program were, and generally whether the program should be renewed for a temporary time or made permanent—noted there were three types of adverse effect of particular concern:

1. In a strict sense, the term may be interpreted as depriving American workers of jobs, lowering wages, or impairing conditions of employment that already exist. Under this interpretation, the Department [of Labor]'s obligation would be to assure no worsening of the status quo for American workers.
2. Another possibility might be to interpret "adverse effect" as preventing wages and working conditions from reaching a point they would have reached under the play of forces in a free market if Mexican nationals were not employed in the area.
3. Under a third interpretation, any interruption of normal adjustments that might be expected to take place in the labor market could be considered "adverse effect." . . . Where corrective tendencies [in the equalization of labor supply and demand in the wake of

* These were former Minnesota Republican Senator Edward Thye; Reverend Monsignor George Higgins, of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference; Glenn Garrett, executive director of the Good Neighbor Commission; and University of Southern California chancellor Rufus vonKleinsmid.

> "labor shortages"] are halted, as evidenced by declining wage rates, increased reliance on Mexican labor, displacement of American workers, reluctant recruitment efforts, failure to improve housing and working conditions, etc., "adverse effect" is present.

The consultants went on to point to (but not really very adequately document) a large number of instances of adverse effects. They included displacement of domestic workers by direct grower preference for Mexican National workers (whom farmers could be relatively sure would stay the season) as well as indirectly through the elimination of family housing in favor of bracero barracks, leading "in some areas [to] almost 100 percent of seasonal work on some crops [being] performed by foreign workers"; the use of braceros to intensify peak labor application and thus shorten the harvest, thereby lessening the number of days of work available for domestics; the ability of farm employers to eschew competition with industrial employers for workers and thus keep wages down; the "weaken[ing] of domestic workers' bargaining power" through the workers' own "knowledge of the availability of Mexican nationals" who will compete with them for jobs; the availability of "specials" who worked year round in skilled and semiskilled jobs directly at the expense of domestic workers; and more generally a perverse vicious circle in which "Mexican [wage] rates are tied to domestic wage levels, which, in turn, may be more or less stabilized by the presence of Mexicans."[5]

Actually, the consultants showed wages were more depressed than "stabilized." Between 1953 and 1958, USDA and state labor agency studies showed farm wages in general in the United States increased by 14 percent. But in three-fifths of the areas and crops using braceros wages decreased or stayed the same in nominal terms (which is to say they decreased in real terms), which because of the methodology used, the consultants noted, actually significantly underestimated the extent of stagnation and decline. The consultants concluded that under USDL practices, "if the Department's obligation is to (a) restore wages to levels they would have reached if no foreign workers were in the area, or (b) to attain a level at which supply and demand might balance, or (c) to keep pace with wage trends in which foreign workers were not employed, present procedures do not support this."[6]

In all, the consultants' report to the labor secretary presented a damning picture of the program and of the department's administration of it. Though overly general, and careful to pull its punches when it could, the report made it clear the program depressed agricultural wages, was superfluous ("more than 60 percent of all Mexicans employed at peak work in crops which are in surplus

supply"),* was unfair to nonuser farm employers, and that it was only "probably accurate to conclude" that Mexico "would regret and possibly resent the termination of the program."[7]

The consultants nonetheless recommended the program be renewed. As long as PL 78 "was substantially amended so as to prevent adverse effect, ensure utilization of the domestic work force and limit the use of Mexicans to unskilled seasonal jobs" (all of which they showed the USDL incapable of achieving administratively, no matter the status of the law), they were in favor of continuing a program that they nowhere declared was essential or even necessary; they even recommended the lessening of punitive measures against growers who violated the law (on the specious reasoning that "failure to provide less severe penalties often results in no punitive action at all").[8]

Like the USDL consultants before it, a California Senate Fact Finding Committee produced in 1961 an incredibly damning analysis of the actual working of the bracero program, tracing in high detail not just the various adverse effects, but also how "a great many of the Farm Placement Service's personnel had accepted gifts from growers, a practice which was a matter of course in the Service and which was condoned by the Service's supervisors" (see chapter 11). Like the consultants, it too nonetheless recommended continuation of the program, arguing that its "evolution [was] far from finished" and that it continued to play "a vital and irreplaceable role" in California agriculture. What the Fact Finding Committee failed to appreciate, it seems, was the degree to which that vital and irreplaceable role was a *function* of the program's evolution, and not vice versa. It was a function of the inexorable process of domination.[9]

Though both the USDL consultants and the Fact Finding Committee referred to the Mexican National labor program as "supplementary," and though it was true that in the late 1950s foreign contract labor made up only about 30 percent of seasonal labor force,† as the Fact Finding Committee elsewhere argued, their

* Anthony Rios of CSO told Henry Anderson that it was becoming common for growers to use braceros to harvest lemon orchards that domestic crews used to shun: "If there wasn't enough fruit to make it worth our while going in, we would simply tell the grower to forget the whole thing." Anderson suggested this was part of a more general trend where growers were less frequently plowing crops under or letting fruit drop when it was not economical to harvest it, thereby adding to surplus production. Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 245.

† In 1959, foreign contract workers (braceros plus Japanese and Filipino nationals imported under another program) made up 28.9 percent of employed seasonal labor during the peak week and 27.4 percent of seasonal labor during the lowest week; however, it is likely that during the weeks on either side of the peak foreign contract labor exceeded 30 percent. See the discussion in California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 84 (including figure 55). See also Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, table 41108, which

role in shaping labor dynamics was anything but supplemental. The first and most obvious way in which braceros determined the overall structure of the capital-labor relation was, as already indicated, in the question of wages. Braceros were guaranteed the prevailing wage. But as study after study showed, and as officials admitted, there was, in agriculture, no such thing. However, the fiction of the prevailing wage (in the words of the Senate Fact Finding Committee)

> permit[s] farmers who use braceros extensively to freeze the level of wages. Although domestic farm laborers find the demand for their services greater than the supply [assuming there truly is the shortage of workers necessary to trigger a certification of need], no benefits of this situation accrue to them in the form of increased wages. Because wages paid to domestics do not increase, there is no impellent to raise the Mexican workers' wage rates. And because the bracero using grower is enabled in this fashion to maintain absolute control over much of his labor costs, costs which are vastly important in California's agriculture . . . he is in a superior economic position over growers of the same crop in other areas who do not or cannot employ Mexican Nationals. Thus the incentives to such growers to take advantage of this opportunity are, needless to say, great.

The very notion of a grower-set prevailing wage had by the end of the 1950s enabled growers "to effectively freeze wages in the face of continuing labor shortages."[10]

Actually, it had enabled even more than that. By freezing and depressing wages, it had both enabled *and encouraged* domination. "It is vital to stress," the Fact Finding Committee wrote, "that domestic workers would continue to be very reluctant to work in certain California crops under existing wage rates and earning potentials" (no matter what improvements around the edges of work conditions the state might be able to make), thus making a shortage of domestic workers, and domination by unfree contract workers, something like a self-fulfilling prophecy, since Clause (3) made it clear that, in order to secure braceros, growers never had to pay *domestic* workers more than this artificially depressed prevailing wage that they proposed to pay the imported workers. It advanced domination in another way too. In 1958 (according to Galarza), the San Joaquin Farm Production Association requested certification for carrot harvesters. No wage survey was carried out. Instead, the association met and agreed to pay 12¢ per 40 pounds. Edward Hayes accepted this wage as the pre-

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shows that for all crops in California, weekly bracero use ranged between 27.6 and 50.0 percent in 1957. At the same time, DoH officials estimated in 1959 that approximately 60 percent of labor camps housing five or more people "accommodated Mexican Nationals wholly or in part." "Additional Notes," n.d., Division of Housing Records, File 61.

vailing wage and certified the association for 750 braceros. Galarza asserted that a conservative estimate was an average worker could pick 2,000 pounds a day, making about $6 (or 60¢ per hour for a ten-hour day); 750 braceros could complete the whole harvest in eleven days, even if there were *no* domestic workers available. But the minimum contract for braceros was forty-five days, leaving them available for more than a month for other harvests in the area over which the San Joaquin Farm Production Association had jurisdiction.[11]

Domination compounded the problem of wage determination. A key, "unsolved" problem facing program administrators was "how to determine the prevailing wage rates paid to domestic workers when, in fact, there are no such workers in an area or a particular crop activity, or there are too few domestics to provide an adequate wage base for a wage survey," as the Fact Finding Committee put it.* In 1957, BES raised the issue with RFLOAC. Glenn Brockway told the assembled growers that "the Bureau was anxious to develop better and more workable procedures in the whole wage determination area." But in broaching the subject, Brockway laid out a stunning concession to growers (and to the whole theory of labor power as a commodity bought and sold on something of an equal basis). Leland Yost, a large grower from the Coachella Valley, had raised concerns that any new procedure might mean wage hearings or similar practices. Brockway quickly "assured the Committee that there was no intention to propose public hearings" to determine prevailing wages. Rather, he said, he "recognized the type of consultation Mr. Yost proposed was to be between the parties directly involved, namely, the growers and the Government." Workers, whether domestic or bracero, were apparently not considered to be "directly involved"; they were somehow not party to the determination of their own wages. This was stunning not only because of what it said about BES's understanding of the wage relationship, but because, less abstractly, PL 78, Section 503, specifically held that "in carrying out the provisions of (1) and (2) of this section, provisions shall be made for consultation with agricultural employers *and workers* for the purpose of obtaining facts relevant to the supply of domestic farm workers *and the wages paid* such workers engaged in similar employment." In essence, Brockway blithely told RFLOAC that BES had no intention of following either the spirit or the letter of the law.[12]

* This contradiction was compounded by the fact that the international agreement required orders for Mexican Nationals be placed thirty days in advance of need. In many harvests, therefore, and not only dominated ones, the mere fact the harvest had not started meant there were no domestic workers about whom a prevailing wage could be found. Once again, then, the default position of the FPS and the USDL was to defer to the opening wage announced by growers. See Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 220.

Instead, beginning in 1958, the USDL decided the answer to the unsolved problem of prevailing wages in dominated areas was to require employers to pay braceros in dominated areas rates equal to those paid for similar work in a nearby district. California farmers immediately cried foul and in their arguments, perhaps best articulated by the chief of research and statistics in the California Department of Employment, George Roche, it was not only easy to see why, but also to see how, the bracero program had been built into the very structure of capitalist farming in California and thus how farming in the state was now *capitalized* on its basis. A "radical change of wage levels in a county, after a decade of adjustment for the use of foreign contract labor," Roche testified, "could create a financial crisis for the growers involved." The Department of Labor immediately backed down and *no* means for determining the prevailing wage (besides taking the growers' word for it) was implemented.[13]

The result was that Clause (3) became the determining one and "adverse effect" became a logical necessity. Employers were reminded in 1959 by the director of the BES, and FPS officers were officially instructed in 1960, that they had to offer domestic workers wages equivalent to those offered braceros and not the other way around.* That such admonitions and directives had to be made merely confirmed actual practice. PL 78 (Section 503) required prevailing wage determinations to "be posted in the appropriate local public employment offices and such other public places as the Secretary might require." This was rarely done. Even so FPS officials would only investigate violations of the law—domestic workers being paid less than the wage determined for braceros—if domestic workers originally applied through their offices. Yet, since "gate-hiring" by employers (both bracero users and nonusers) remained common throughout California, bypassing the FPS offices, rarely was even Clause (3) ever enforced.[14]

On the Margins of Domination: Power in the Peach Bowl

The inexorable logic of domination, unleashed by the contradiction at the heart of Section 503, was best seen in those crop areas that were *not* (yet) officially dominated. One such crop area was the Peach Bowl around Marysville. During the week ending August 10, 1957, braceros comprised 25.6 percent of the 550

* In 1963, Robert Goodwin of the BES gave the game away. "On the matter of wages and opportunities for employment," he wrote Imperial Valley labor activist Mike Miranda, "in the Brawley area, as you know, much of the domestic labor leaves the area because of the higher wages traditionally quoted in the North which makes it difficult to determine conclusively the presence or extent of adverse effect on wages and employment." Goodwin to Miranda, June 23, 1963, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4.

hired peach pickers; in Sutter County, they comprised 54.6 percent of the 2,500 harvest workers.* Marysville was where the first federal migrant labor camp was built in 1935. In its wake many Okie families had settled out of the migratory life in the area, piecing together relatively stable lives combining peak harvest work throughout the region, off-season pruning and planting work, seasonal trips to the cotton harvest, nonfarm general labor, and sometimes permanent employment in the expanding peach, apricot, pear, and almond orchards, and the vegetable and melon farms. Indeed, as early as 1960 estimates suggested that statewide, three of four hired temporary domestic workers worked within a daily commute of their home—and the settled-out Okies (like their Mexican American counterparts) were typical of this class of workers. At peak season, local peach pickers were joined by harvesters from as far away as the Imperial Valley, often referred north by local Farm Placement offices.[15]

With the growth of bracero use, Galarza claimed, wages in the Peach Bowl "were falling, and working conditions were reverting to the labor camp style of life"—the kinds of conditions that had prompted the building of the Marysville camp (and its later replacement camp in Yuba City) a generation earlier. The Yuba City labor supply camp, now run by the county housing authority, but essentially under the command of the Northern California Growers Association, was slow to fill for the 1957 season. By mid-July, when it was usually full, the apartment units were all taken, but a number of camp units were empty, as were a number of units that had been damaged by a large flood in December 1955 (in which it seems one bracero was killed as he attempted to shore up a dike) and never repaired. Nearby trailer camps stood close to empty. Galarza, in the area because NAWU was preparing for a concerted (if poorly funded) organizing campaign, described the labor market as "derange[d]" because "seasonal migrants [were] not returning because of previous years experience" of either not finding work or finding a foreshortened season, given the growing importation of braceros.[16]

But as the peach season opened, more and more pickers, urged into the area by FPS radio and newspapers ads around the state, descended on the Yuba City area, despite (as the union had begun to document in statements and affidavits) the fact that domestic workers referred to orchards by the FPS and those showing up at the gates on their own were often turned away. Those who did find

* True to form, the braceros were being set to work in a peach harvest in surplus. In June 1957, cling peach growers in the Sacramento Valley agreed to a binding "green drop" of 16 percent of their crop, and a further 7 percent diversion (to landfill, pig farms, etc.) of the crop at the canneries. "Growers to Strip 16 Per Cent of Clings to Avoid Surplus," *Fresno Bee*, June 20, 1957, 5A.

work often found too little to support their families. Peach growers had been certified for braceros at the rate of 11–14¢ per 40-pound box, a rate unchanged since 1951. Growers, testifying in 1958 hearings before the House Committee on Agriculture, swore that in 1957, at this rate, peach pickers "averaged $10 to $25 per day," and that some earned as much as $60 per day. As critics pointed out, this claim beggared belief. To earn $60 at 12¢ a box, a picker would have to fill 480 boxes; to earn $40 at a high wage of 15¢ a box, a picker would have to fill more than 330 boxes—more than 1 every 2 minutes for 8 hours straight without a break. A top worker in fact typically filled 80–90 boxes per day (10–11 per hour, making around $10 at the 12¢ rate). When estimating employment demand, the California Department of Employment figured average daily output per worker was 45 boxes (5.65 per hour, or under 70¢ an hour).[17]

By mid-August, conditions for many workers were so poor—the *New York Times* reported "widespread unemployment"—that George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, wired Labor Secretary James Mitchell asking him to personally investigate "conditions under which foreign labor [was] being employed with special reference regarding unemployed workers in Yuba City California." Mitchell promised to make Yuba City his "first order of business" on his upcoming West Coast trip, but also expressed full faith in the reports coming out of the San Francisco BES office that no domestic workers were being displaced by braceros. In doing so, he made a crucial admission. "Beginning Monday, this week," he wrote Meany in a telegram dated Thursday, August 15, "all qualified domestic workers in the area who had made themselves available were employed." In other words, *before* Monday, August 12, *not* "all qualified domestic workers" were employed, despite the fact that braceros were arriving regularly. August 12 was the start, in 1957, of the peak harvest, the time when growers, and their helpers in the FPS, went all out to get the harvest in, in as short a time as possible. Before that date, work was typically plentiful, if not as frenetically so as after that date. Given the slow rate at which domestic workers were moving into the area in July, all "qualified domestic workers" *should* have been employed. But, in addition to Mitchell's admission, he also made a crucial omission in his telegram to Meany. His position, he wrote, "has always been and always will continue to be that any qualified worker who presents himself at the employment offices will be referred to any job that may be vacant, or if filled by a foreign worker, to that job as a matter of priority." The omission was about wages. Under Clause (3) workers would be referred to open jobs and jobs held by braceros only at the declared rate of twelve cents a box. If they were average workers, as defined by the Department of Employment, they could count on a daily wage of only five to six dollars. When domestic workers refused work at these

wages, the "labor shortage" justifying bracero importations only deepened. As desperate workers accepted jobs after the August 12 opening of the peak harvest, they found, too, that with the large numbers at work in each orchard, the peak season was shrinking. If it had lasted from August 1 to September 17 in 1955, in 1956 it had been shortened to August 6 to September 1, and in 1957 it shrunk again to August 12 to 31.[18]

Alerted to the deteriorating conditions around Yuba City and Marysville, and aware that a large number of African Americans had long made up a significant portion of the peach harvest labor market, the NAACP sent its own special investigatory team into the Peach Bowl at the height of the harvest. Reporting on their findings in a long letter to Vice President Richard Nixon, they wrote they had found a number of levee bank settlements disproportionately housing blacks (who, they said, were barred from the trailer courts in the area), cooking on makeshift stoves, and sleeping on bare mattresses laid on the ground. C. L. Dellums, the NAACP's regional secretary, and Lester Bailey, the West Coast field secretary, informed Nixon that the riverbank dwellers along with "hundreds of other pickers gathered in the area" were suffering "as a result of their displacement, prior to the peak peach-picking period, by Mexican and Japanese Nationals," and that as the peak season opened on August 12, the little aid they were receiving—food vouchers and some cash assistance for a few families—was abruptly cut off.* "Wages depressed by the presence of imported labor made it impossible for most American pickers and their families to earn enough to sustain themselves, not to mention building up a reserve."[19]

In addition to the river bank, Dellums and Bailey visited a private orchard camp where health authorities had ordered the removal of braceros for health reasons. At this camp, a "crew of 10 Negroes had replaced the foreign labor, both in terms of picking peaches and occupying the one room [substandard] quarters." Elsewhere, in another camp "occupied solely by Negroes, more than 25 families were living in dirt-floor tents. There was one water faucet for all

* The *Times* cited Sutter and Yuba County welfare officials as saying that emergency relief demands were 31 to 48 percent higher than for the same period the previous year. "Mexicans in Jobs on Farms at Issue," *New York Times*, August 17, 1957, 50. Beginning in 1956, Japanese and Filipino farm workers were imported under PL 414 in an "experimental" program that in essence launched what is now known as the H2 program (see chapter 13). See Calavita, *Inside the State*, 135–36. The California government's interest in the program is spelled out in Stewart to Horst, June 17, 1956; Stewart to Townsend, July 7, 1956; Stewart to Masaoka, July 20, 1956; Stewart to Rozzoni, July 23, 1956; Stewart to Angier, August 9, 1956; Stewart to McAllister, August 16, 1956; Stewart to Mochisuki and Stewart to Masushita, July 23, 1956, all in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 11.

purposes, and the two showers provided for men and women were situated in a small sheet-iron shed for which there was no sewer outlet. Toilets there were outside affairs set up in a ditch about 25 yards from the tents. All families prepared their food on makeshift stoves in the open. Refuse and debris in this camp was running over the sides of several large oil cans provided as receptacles. There were no laundry facilities provided. We also learned that the children in this camp will not be provided with transportation to schools located beyond the normal walking distance." At the former federal camp in Yuba City, where there was now a waiting list for housing, "bathing, washing and toilet facilities . . . were in as poor conditions as those noted in the privately run camps."[20]

Many of those living in the Yuba City camp were in arrears for their rent, and a large squatters' camp had been erected in the area around the flood-damaged housing.* Conditions for braceros were hardly better. Before and after being farmed out to various user-members by the Northern California Growers Association, braceros arriving for the Peach Bowl were gathered in El Carralon, "a stockade eight feet high" with "few amenities other than a tank of drinking water exposed to the blazing sun." According to Galarza, "the corral had neither seats nor roof" to protect workers from the 100-degree heat. One contractor for the association established a check-cashing service. Mexican Nationals apparently sometimes slept there in the open when there was no user-member available to receive them. According to Ralph Willis, dispatcher and manager of Yellow Cab in Marysville, five braceros at the Northern California Growers Association headquarters (next to El Carralon) called for a taxi to take them to town to cash their checks before returning to Mexico. As the braceros climbed into the cab (which had stopped outside the gates), "Mr. Charles Rhodes, manager of the Growers' Association crossed the highway and ordered the Mexican Nationals out. The men got out of the cab and we lost the fares." When called by Willis for an explanation, Rhodes "stated he would not permit Mexican Nationals to ride in taxicabs. He said he would build a stockade to prevent taxis from picking up Nationals at his headquarters." Rhodes further stated that "Nationals working for the Association are not allowed to hire cabs from headquarters. His attitude seems to be 'we don't want you fooling around with our boys.'"[21]

Willis thought that there was more to the denial of his taxis to Nationals than just an effort to control workers' movements. Rather, as with the opera-

* The operator of the Yuba City camp said that 75 percent of the tenants were behind on their rent. "Mexicans in Jobs on Farms at Issue," *New York Times*, August 17, 1957, 50; notes "Yuba-Sutter area," July–August 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11.

tor of the check-cashing service, special operators stood to make a significant amount of money off a captive bracero labor force—by setting up transportation services, company stores, in-camp restaurants, and the like. With seven other local business owners, Yellow Cab co-owner J. A. Willis wired Governor Knight on August 14 (followed up with a letter two weeks later) to complain about how braceros were effectively barred from patronizing them, and how the "underemployment and unemployment of domestic workers has become [a] critical cause of decline in retail trade in [local] communities." Such concerns were echoed throughout the state in the late 1950s, as small business owners complained of the internalization of bracero commerce by growers associations, the subsequent steep profits the managers and directors of those associations were making, and the consequent wiping out of the spending power of domestic workers.[22]

Governor Knight replied to Willis with a string of irrelevancies. He said his director of the Department of Employment had conducted an investigation of the business owners' charges and found in the Peach Bowl, all those domestic workers who applied to the Department of Employment were given referrals, no Mexican or Japanese workers were displacing domestic workers, and the bracero program was "being administered strictly in accordance with federal law as well as international agreements . . . ," none of which claims addressed the complaints of the business owners.[23]

It is not that the governor was necessarily inaccurate. The program *was* being administered as designed, though there was an interpretive matter at stake. In order to test the limits of the program's administration, the union adopted the tactic of having job seekers demand jobs they knew were currently filled by braceros. When they did so—as with six domestic workers seeking to be assigned to a fruit dehydrator operated on the Berg Ranch on August 26, 1957—instead they were referred to *other* open jobs (sometimes lower-paying ones). For FPS officials, like Alvin Tollefson in Marysville, it was enough to place domestic workers; for NAWU the goal was to *dis*place braceros (something the BES, the FPS, and the California Department of Employment had frequently averred they stood ready to do)* and thus to return *domestic* workers back to a position of dominance.[24]

Despite its incessant activity and propagandizing during the fall harvest in

* This commitment was severely limited by the FPS's refusal to work with crews of workers or with licensed contractors, averring it was only the "rights [of] individual workers making application through the Department of Employment office . . . in seeking work," with which they needed to be concerned. Burkett to Bright, May 19, 1954; Burkett to Mitchell, May 27, 1954, both in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

the Peach Bowl (which included action in the pear, prune, and tomato harvests as well as the peach harvest), and despite a dedicated cadre of what Galarza called "volunteers" engaged in a "self-help operation," NAWU was in fact poorly positioned either to push demands or to make them stick. The national office of NAWU was all but broke. Galarza was the only paid organizer in the state, and his role was mostly limited to "action research." The Packinghouse Workers continued to be active, especially in the Salinas Valley, and their efforts were frequently more strongly supported by the AFL-CIO, and sometimes its research efforts outclassed what Galarza alone could do. As well, jurisdictional disputes along with stuttering attempts at some kind of merger between the two unions continued to occupy much of Galarza's and Mitchell's time. Simultaneously, Mitchell was pursuing a separate merger possibility with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, spearheaded by longtime Mitchell ally Patrick Gorman. Back in Marysville, Galarza sought to bolster the power of the union by entering into an agreement with the newly formed California Licensed Farm Labor Contractors Association, headed by NAWU friend Dewitt Tannehill. Tannehill saw contractors' interests intersecting with the union's and with workers' over the issues of domination and the refusal of the FPS to consider the needs of workers *except* as individuals applying through its offices. Though this alliance did not amount to much by way of on-the-ground gains, like the complaints by business owners over the doleful economic effects of the labor importation, it did suggest possibilities for political and organizational alliances as NAWU and increasing numbers of others (like the NAACP) turned their attention now to eliminating the bracero program altogether,* reasoning that domestic worker gains in the fields would be impossible so long as the program remained.[25]

Nonetheless NAWU did, in fact, make some gains in its campaign. Feeling the heat of the union's incessant complaints to the governor about violations in the program, its ongoing campaign to publicize how the program was displacing domestic workers, and increasing pressure on both the Mexican and U.S. governments from religious organizations and others to end the program, the FPS

* Despite the limits he faced, Galarza laid out an ambitious plan for organizing for 1958. But he also wrote, "It must be kept in mind that no organizing effort will succeed in Central California which does not recognize that the control of the growers associations over the local labor market through the importation of Mexican Nationals must be severely curtailed, if not eliminated completely. This will call for vigorous support from the AFL-CIO morally, politically, legislatively and legally." He also noted that if the bracero program was eliminated, vigilance against farmers recruiting "wetbacks" would have to stepped up. "Organization of Farm Workers—California," May 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 9, File 6.

refused to certify the use of braceros for winter pruning in the northern part of the state. Despite vociferous complaints to the governor by orchardists—for example, those banded together as the Valleys Farm Labor Association, Inc., a new association representing three hundred growers in Napa, Solano, and Yolo counties—who argued skilled domestic workers simply were not available, the ban on using braceros in pruning held, a fact NAWU took credit for and which it attempted (without success)* to parley into agreements with various growers associations to provide workers to fill their pruning needs.[26]

The Question of Housing

Whatever the efforts of NAWU, NAACP, and others, domination advanced, accompanied by a continued transformation of the landscape that further entrenched the program, making it (from the point of view of growers) almost impossible to conceive of a California agriculture without braceros. Crucial to the Valleys Farm Labor Association's November 1957 complaint to the governor about the ban on bracero pruners, for example, was that it had not been able to recruit enough pruners despite advertising that "living quarters for single men" would be provided. As studies dating back to the 1930s had shown, however, domestic workers often traveled and sought work as families. The shift to single-man housing to accommodate braceros proved to be a very basic impediment to recruiting domestic labor. Particular kinds of housing, it seemed, demanded particular kinds of workers, and so the association appealed to the governor to overturn the ban on bracero pruners and let them import up to 50 percent of each member-user's "winter needs" to provide—in another admission that braceros were not the "supplemental" labor they were described as in law—"a nucleus to the grower of workers more adapted to this kind of work" than were domestic workers, who now had to be both trained and specially housed.[27]

The BES understood the centrality of housing to cultivating a labor force. The very day (April 3, 1957) its backtracking memo on its newfound commitment to holding growers to minimal housing standards for Mexican National workers through more thorough self-reporting was disseminated to field representatives, the BES also informed their field representatives that they were

* Nor did the ban survive the following year. FPS certified braceros from pruning in Napa County in 1958, and for other areas of the northern part of the state "Hayes advises all managers that it is up to them to make the decisions and they had [better] not make the wrong ones," according to Galarza's contemporaneous notes. "Pruning and Nationals—1958," n.d., Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 1.

now to use "all appropriate means" to assure that growers provided adequate housing for domestic workers and their families, given, as A. J. Norton of the BES wrote, the tight relationship between type of housing available and the ability to recruit special kinds of workers. "The point should be emphasized to all farm employers that all plans for new housing or the major renovation of existing housing should provide for flexible structures, adaptable for migrant workers in family groups or single workers, to further the full utilization of available domestic workers. In addition, farm employers should be informed that the adaptability of new or remodeled farm labor housing will be taken into consideration in evaluating requests for foreign workers." There is absolutely no evidence that this command was ever followed through (indeed, as we saw, the BES instead cut back the number of field representatives in the region in favor of creating a corps of middle-level managers charged with working more closely with employers rather than policing compliance with the rules of the program). The only new construction Galarza was able to find in the Peach Bowl in the early summer of 1957 was a camp for braceros "going up on a farm owned by Japanese." It was designed for flexibility, though perhaps not in quite the way Norton imagined: it "was designed as a tool and equipment house to serve as a bunkhouse in summer," Galarza wrote in his notes.[28]

Or, as the farm reporter for the McClatchy News Service reported in the wake of the 1957 Peach Bowl Harvest:

> The need to change over to domestic help in pruning undoubtedly will create problems for growers who had counted on nationals. . . . Family type housing, usually needed for domestic labor, will create a problem in many districts. Because of increased use of nationals in recent seasons, family type housing destroyed by the 1955 flood in Yuba and Sutter counties never has been replaced. Many family facilities have been eliminated in the San Joaquin Valley since the advent of the mechanical cotton picker.* "In addition, some migrant camps have been con-

* While cotton harvesting had been significantly mechanized in the years since World War II, a large population of temporary workers was still required for both chopping and picking. At its high point (1946) the cotton harvest in the San Joaquin Valley commanded a labor force of more than 90,000. A decade later it was about half that. In 1958, peak chopping labor demand in the state was 19,300; in 1959, it was 20,200; and in 1960, it was 21,400. Peak cotton-picking labor demand was declining rapidly, but still large: in 1958, it was 61,500; in 1959, it was 52,350; and in 1960, it was 36,400. Peak chopping season lasted about a month in May–June; peak harvest season lasted from one to two months in October and November (sometimes stretching into the first week of December). It is hard to know how much of the picking and chopping labor was done by braceros. Braceros seem only to have been approved for use in the desert area. But the data do not make sense. Peak harvest demand in the desert area for 1960

> demned by the state division of housing," [Edward] Hayes reported. Several "quite distressing" situations already have arisen from the housing shortage, he added.

Whether Hayes specified the nature of these "distressing" situations is not reported, unless it is merely that, as the manager of the Yolo Growers Association said in the paragraph immediately following the Hayes quotation, without braceros, the job of pruning almond trees in his district "undoubtedly will take a lot longer."[29]

Through their associations, growers liked to boast of the quality of the camps they built and maintained for braceros. But model conditions in bracero camps were anything but universal;* nor were many growers predisposed to providing anything above the minimum required, a minimum vigorously and repeatedly contested. In May 1958, Henry Anderson, on his way to becoming a prominent critic of the bracero program, was in the Imperial Valley conducting research on public health questions related to the importation program. He described to Galarza the conditions he encountered at the main bracero reception center (where he was conducting his research) and elsewhere in the Valley: "There is absolutely no provision for heating the barracks at the El Centro Reception Center. Nor have I seen any camp in the Imperial Valley where there is such provision. I asked the local compliance man about this. I'll give you his reply verbatim: 'There'd be no sense in going to the expense of installing stoves in these places. They'd never be turned on. Or if they were, the men would have to open all the windows to make the place liveable [sic]. When you get a barracks with twenty or thirty men in it around here, the heat from their bodies is enough to keep it warm all night, even on the coldest nights of the year.'"[30]

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was 4,150, but the reported peak use of braceros in 1960 (which in fact may not have been measured at the absolute peak, given that reporting ended on October 29) was 4,660—or 112 percent of demand! In any event, leaving aside any Mexican Nationals loaned to San Joaquin cotton growers, there still remained a cotton labor force of tens of thousands of domestic workers, despite mechanization, who had to be housed. Data for 1946 from Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, figure 7146; data for 1958 and 1959 from California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: figure 42, 69; data for labor demand in 1960 computed from ibid., figure 41, 58–68; data for bracero use from ibid., figure 68, 107–9.

* For example, while the main Buena Vista Labor Camp operated by the Ventura County Farm Labor Association might have been both large and in good nick, smaller camps to which braceros were distributed, and to which domestic workers were frequently relegated, were, according to a city Improvement Committee, "deplorable." Richard Lyttle, "Largest Labor Camp in Nation in Oxnard," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, March 6, 1958, 11; "Improvement Committee Tells Progress, Asks Suggestions," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, February 6, 1958, 3.

The following November, Anderson reported on a trip to the Imperial Valley, where he "was witness to the most unvarnished display of inhumanity I have seen in two very full years of bracero camp following." The temperature in the Valley dropped, he said, to 27°F (he later tracked down weather service data that showed that low temperatures in the Valley varied between 27.8° and 30.3° between November 16 and 18).

> I visited many of the camps during this period. The situation was invariable: the men were provided one thin cotton blanket, and there was absolutely no provision for heating in the barracks. In the middle of the day Sunday, when the temperature was in the middle 50s, I saw whole barracks-full of braceros fully dressed, with shirts tied around their ears, huddled in their bunks trying to keep warm. They were unable to do so even then. For the life of me I do not see how they survived the night.
>
> The next morning, the headlines: "Crop Losses Heavy." I've seen the tomato seedlings and other tender plants sheltered with long rows of wrapping paper. The crops are better protected than the workers. . . .
>
> The last straw was a talk I had with the mayordomo of one of the camps I visited. He admitted, as nicely as you please, that he provided only one blanket and if the men wanted more they had to pay him for them. . . .
>
> I saw one poor devil who was taking care of a field of sheep, who was sleeping in a flimsy cotton tent. (No he wasn't a Basque. He was a bracero.) And then, of course, there are the irrigators, who have the nicest sleeping arrangements of all. Namely, none. . . .
>
> To summarize, I would be surprised if there is a single labor camp among the 250 in Imperial County which provides any means of heating. After all, why should they? The Reception Center provides none, and the Department of Labor sets the standards. The Reception Center, incidentally, sets the pattern of one blanket per man, too. To be scrupulously fair, however, I believe the USDL blankets have some wool content.[31]

Growers seemed intent on assuring Anderson was not exaggerating. Even as Anderson was touring the Imperial Valley, the DoH was holding a series of hearings around the state on housing standards. On November 17, as temperatures in the Imperial dipped below freezing, growers and officials met with DoH staff a little farther north in Riverside. Besides arguing that heaters in camp buildings were superfluous and there was little reason to have specific requirements about indoor temperatures written into the labor camp standards, DoH staff heard Dr. R. S. Westphal of the Stanislaus County Health Depart-

ment on the likes and dislikes of Mexican workers: "Having almost 20 years of experience with regulations, I suggest deletion of the word 'sheets.' They will be considered as a requirement of a camp and most Mexicans do not like sheets." Westphal was commenting on a proposed regulation that read: "(a) All sheets, pillow cases, blankets, bed covers, mattresses, mattress covers shall be kept in a sanitary condition." A representative of the Tulelake Growers Association complained: "These labor camps temporary as ours is seasonal [sic]. Why is it so necessary to provide these people with so much better facilities than they are used to under normal conditions? They come up, sleep in the ditch bank if we don't provide some facilities. . . . In fact some of them are better than [they] are used to and if there is anything loose around there they will chop it up and burn it up. Why is it necessary to make laws so prohibitive for people who are trying to accommodate them as best we can?" Growers up and down the state wanted different rules for temporary and permanent camps. "We recognize that where large numbers of people congregate for long periods of time, flush toilets are desirable," the head of the San Benito County Farm Bureau argued two days later at a second hearing in Fresno, "but we do not believe they should be required for temporary camps." Growers argued that "temporary" should be defined as any camp open 120 days (four months) or fewer.*[32]

Temporary or not, growers, in what was obviously a coordinated campaign (the language used by several representatives was identical), chafed at having to provide toilets for Mexican Nationals. "Some of these men never saw a water closet type of toilet," argued one grower from Placerville at the third hearing (held in Marysville), "and they don't know how to use it. This would actually hinder sanitation in those camps and I have heard, and believe it to be the truth, a water closet type toilet with an uneducated personnel becomes a health hazard. With outhouses, it is simple and we can control it to some extent. I object to putting in a water closet type toilet in my camp which is very likely a health hazard when I can use an outhouse. I'd like to object on that stand to prevent [a] health hazard in the future." Frequently growers made their arguments not on their own behalf, as above, but they said, on behalf of their workers. Assur-

* The final rules—which became effective July 1, 1959—acquiesced to growers on this point. "Seasonal" camps were defined as those operating for 120 days or fewer (the term "temporary" was reserved for camps not operated on the same site annually, and which were set up "for one operation and then . . . removed"). State of California, DIR, DoH, *Employee Housing (Labor Camps): Labor Code, Division 2, Part 9, Article 4 and Rules and Regulation to Implement, Interpret, and Make Specific Provisions of the Labor Code Relating to Employee Housing, 1959* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1959), 4.

ing sanitary sheets and blankets, they argued, constituted an invasion of their workers' right to privacy.[33]

The final rules and regulations issued by the DoH strengthened protections for workers in some areas. For the first time camp operators were required to heat their bunkhouses; they had to provide heat, if during the time of occupancy it was needed to maintain the bunkhouses at a minimum of 60°F; hot water still had to be provided for showers (despite grower attempts to eliminate this provision);* and "seasonal camps"—what growers referred to as "temporary camps" in their testimony (those annually open for fewer than 120 days)—continued to be required to provide flush toilets (except in some rare instances when a written waiver could be obtained). But no language at all was inserted into the regulations concerning the provision of blankets, sheets, or other bedding, sanitary or not. While braceros were still guaranteed a *single* blanket under provision of the standard work contract, domestic workers were not (indeed, they only had to be provided with a mattress "upon request" and then a "reasonable charge" could be made against wages for the privilege).[34]

Whatever the improvements in the specification of the labor camp code, they really were not that much. Even before the DoH was finalizing its regulations and clarifications of the labor camp code, a President's Committee on Migratory Labor had already in 1956 developed an extensive, and much more stringent, model camp code. Among other things, it established a 70°F heating standard, rather than the 60° standard implemented in California. It also contained exactly the language about bedding that was rejected in California: "All sheets, pillow cases, blankets or other bed covers provided by the camp operator shall be kept in a sanitary condition." The model code also provided for "regular inspections of beds or bedding . . . to insure freedom from vermin," concerns about worker privacy notwithstanding.[35]

* The provision for heating was added to the Labor Camp Act in 1957; these rules made it operational for the first time. Some growers' representatives, like the director of the influential Agricultural Labor Bureau of the San Joaquin Valley, had objected to the hot water requirement, saying that during the summer it was "entirely unnecessary." They wanted instead language requiring that water be maintained at "a suitable temperature." DoH staff responded that any change on this front would have to be a statutory one, rather than one of regulation. DoH, *Public Hearings*, vol. 2, 21. By summer that year, another problem had become manifest, especially in the Imperial Valley. While there were now regulations governing how low temperatures in labor camps could go, there were none governing how high. Growers often either did not turn on swamp coolers no matter how hot the barracks got, or they let broken coolers remain unfixed. See affidavit of Lopez-Cortez, De La Cruz-Rom, and Martinez-Dias, July 19, 1959; affidavit of Tapia Salas, both in Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19.

Return to the Peach Bowl

As the 1959 harvest advanced, the effects of California's newly specified labor camp standards were hard to discern. At Gridley, in the Peach Bowl, the old federal camp, now owned and operated by the Butte County Housing Authority, had become de facto year-round housing for twenty-five or twenty-six farm working families (who tended to be employed "about 50 percent of the time" during the winter), despite DoH having ordered it closed during winter months, beginning in December 1958. In summer, the camp housed as many as 1,200 people, about half of whom were under the working age of 16. So much room was available in the camp for domestic workers' families, perhaps, because the Department of Labor had ruled that it did not meet the standards required to house bracero workers. The Butte County Housing Authority, lacking funds to make necessary repairs and upgrades,* ordered the camp shut for the 1959–60 winter, recognizing as it did that resident families were unlikely to find any other shelter in the region they could afford.[36]

Incredibly, DoH investigators found, despite "considerable deterioration over the years" the Gridley camp was among the best maintained of the former federal camps in California, and one of the few that had added structures since the camps were built in the 1930s or 1940s. An investigator for the newly charted California Citizens Committee for Agricultural Labor (in which NAWU-affiliated lawyer James Murray acted as secretary) argued that the problem was that throughout the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys, "growers provided housing for single men. They do not provide the more expensive type of housing required by families. That means that the families must have some place like the public farm labor centers to which they can go" (other than ditch banks, camping on which remained "not uncommon"). The investigator, it seems, underestimated the problem. DoH reported, for example, that in all of nearby Yolo County, its records indicated that in 1959 there was farm housing (of any quality) available for only 72 families. However, there was also enough available housing "for 12,364 foreign workers."[37]

Domination, according to Edward Hayes, "grew like topsy."[38]

* Representatives of the authority cited as one reason it was broken was that wintering families ate up a lot of the rent proceeds made during the summer peak as they tried "to keep warm by keeping the gas [cooking] plates on in their cabins." Joe Gunterman, "The Gridley Farm Labor Center: A Report to California Citizens Committee for Agricultural Labor," October 25, 1959, p. 4, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8.

Dead Labor

The Past Materialized, the Present Shaped

"DEAD LABOR," FOR MARX, is the labor power—the expended energy—"congealed" in a commodity. It is "labour materialized" or "labour incorporated with its subject." Where environmental historian Richard White wants us to see a landscape like that carved by the Columbia River as a product of work and energy, Marx wants us to understand that it is work and energy trapped, metamorphosed from its kinetic back to its potential form. In capitalism that potential form of energy is a commodity, a solid thing. All is not flow and circulation. "Permanence" matters. Morphology has its effects. Through work energy is transferred to raw materials and something new is shaped. Energy, minus some waste, is "frozen" or "solidified" in the commodity. Struggle—both direct struggle with materials and the more diffuse and perhaps even abstract struggle that is social relations—is staunched, given body in the form of the commodity—whether that commodity is a head of lettuce or a (now perhaps flushing) head in a labor camp. "Labour is the living, form-giving fire"—which is nonetheless under the control of the capitalist, at least once the commodity labor-power is sold. "By incorporating living labour with their dead substance, the capitalist at the same time converts value, i.e. past, materialized, and dead labour into capital, into value big with value, a live monster that is fruitful and multiplies."[1]

Marx makes clear that while capital is always a relationship, its *form* is always the form of dead labor—labor past, materialized, and realized through exchange (this is as true of a living commodity like a peach as it is of an inert one like a hoe). In production—in the labor process—capital is created and shaped. Marx is at pains to show, however, that at a certain level of accumulation, and given capitalist relations of exploitation, the relation between living and dead labor is flipped on its head: dead labor dominates living labor. "Instead of being consumed by him as material elements of his productive activity," Marx writes, "they [commodities or materialized labor; that is, capital] consume him as a ferment necessary to their own life-process, and the life process of capital consists only in its movement as value constantly expanding, constantly multiplying itself. Furnaces and workshops that stand idle by night, and absorb no living labour," Marx concludes, "are 'a mere loss' to the capitalist." Dead labor, in other words, comes to command living labor; as such, it demands living labor of a

particular quality, and of a particular form. And it demands lots of it: "capital is dead labour that vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more it sucks."[2]

Marx used the notion of dead labor almost entirely metaphorically. But in California, over the long history of capitalist agricultural development dead labor has been anything but metaphorical. And, amazingly, dead labor is only very rarely "'a mere loss' to the capitalist." California agribusiness is built on dead labor, literally.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Dead Labor—Literally

(Another) Crisis in the Bracero Program

Few old-time California gold seekers were as lucky as the *bracero*.

"A New Deal for the Mexican Workers," *Look*, September 22, 1959

We must make the program look respectable.

Congressman Charles M. Teague, 1958

IN AUGUST 1957, even as the NAACP was investigating appalling conditions in the Peach Bowl, even as public health nurse Ann Hollingsworth was describing the "bullpen"—El Carralon—for braceros in Yuba City, and not long after the BES and growers were publicizing their new feeding standards and code of conduct, reports began appearing in the California press of a series of "mystery deaths" among braceros. Depending on the article, either fourteen or twenty Mexican Nationals had died in their sleep since 1955. According to Dr. Irma West of the California Department of Public Health, "the pattern in nearly all the cases was identical." Most papers reported the affected workers ranged in age from twenty-three to forty-six (one account has them between twenty and thirty). In the words of the first story on the subject, they "went to work during the day with no complaint of illness. They ate heartily at the end of the day and went to bed. During the night they had violent nightmares and then they died." No clear cause of death was evident in any of the cases. Dr. West told a conference of coroners that similar deaths had affected farm workers in the Philippines and Hawaii and that Filipino workers called them "dream deaths" and attributed them to what she called "voodoo." Later press reports assured readers that voodoo was decidedly not involved; they also quoted Dr. West as saying that in none of the California deaths was there evidence of nightmares. Instead, she thought focus ought to be trained on the question of nutrition.[1]

After "patiently investigating" the deaths, Dr. West was able to show that two braceros had died from organic phosphate (insecticide) poisoning, one had starved himself to death to save money on board, but the rest of the deaths remained unexplained, even after autopsies. Henry Anderson, investigating health conditions among braceros in the Imperial Valley, hypothesized that the deaths may have been due to "deculturalization and culture shock," maladies several psychiatrists with close contact with the program had suggested led in some cases to "functional illness." There was no more evidence that "culture shock" was at the root of these deaths, however, than there was evidence that voodoo was to blame. The deaths remained a mystery.[2]

Other deaths among braceros were far less mysterious. Early one morning in late May 1958, contract National Vidal Lopez Silva was driving a tractor in a melon field near Holtville in the Imperial Valley. A crop duster spraying malathion swooped too low and decapitated him. Braceros were not approved for driving tractors, but the USDL cleared the farmer and the Imperial Valley Farmers Association of culpability on the grounds the bracero was driving the tractor as "a special favor" to the regular driver, not directly at the request of the grower. In Soledad, less than three weeks later, twelve braceros were killed and seventeen others injured seriously enough to be hospitalized when the truck

they were riding in—a truck "converted into a bus" with its "sides boarded up," a roof of tin, and a "chained shut" tailgate—burst into flames and roasted them alive. It is likely a cigarette one of the men was lighting ignited one of the partially filled gas cans that were also in the back of the truck. As a result of the accident, the California Division of Industrial Safety launched a one-week program of stepped-up inspection of farm-labor transportation trucks in the farm areas around Salinas, Stockton, Fresno, Sacramento, Riverside, and the Imperial Valley, during which "several hundred vehicles were checked, and the Division of Safety Engineers wrote requirements to correct more than 2,000 unsafe conditions."[3]

But the Soledad tragedy was far from being the first, nor would it be the last, accident involving trucks transporting braceros resulting in multiple deaths. Between 1952 and 1963, there were a total of 1,205 recorded farm transportation accidents, or more than 1 every 3.5 days, on average; 2,973 farm workers were injured seriously enough in these accidents to miss at least one day of work; another 159 were killed. The most famous (or infamous) of these accidents—on September 17, 1963, a Southern Pacific train plowed into a farm labor bus at a crossing in Chualar (south of Salinas), killing 31 braceros and 1 domestic worker, while injuring 22 braceros and 3 domestics (only the driver of the bus was physically unscathed)—led to a full-scale, though controversial, congressional investigation overseen by Adam Clayton Powell.[4]

Nor was Vidal Lopez Silva to be the last bracero killed operating machinery he was not supposed to be. On the whole, while injury and death rates in industry were slowly declining, in agriculture they were on the rise. In 1957, disabling injuries occurred at a rate of 50.0 per 1,000 workers (or 54% higher than in the all-industry average); in 1961, the rate was 56.5 injuries per 1,000 workers (or 77% higher than average) (table 11.1). According to the report of the California Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Farm Labor Problems, "the rate and number of injuries" in agriculture showed "a fairly consistent upward trend," though the small number of years for which data were available made it difficult to know whether the rate and number of fatalities were similarly on the rise. Only construction and mining had higher rates of injury. In 1961, 1,194 farm workers suffered debilitating injuries while operating machines (including tractors); the number of those who were braceros is unreported (table 11.2).[5]

There is no doubt that more and more braceros were operating tractors and other machinery.* On May 25, 1959, the IVFA received certification from the FPS

* Officials in the Knight administration liked to deny this by reminding Californians, "There is a large Latin-American population" in California's farming regions "and it is sometimes hard to

TABLE 11.1 California Industrial Injury Rates

	Disabling Injuries per Thousand Workers	
Industry	1957	1961
All Industry Average	32.4	31.9
Construction	76.9	81.2
Mineral Extraction	69.6	68.9
Agriculture	**50.0**	**56.5**
Transport, Comm., Utilities	35.6	38.8
State and Local Government	33.9	34.1
Manufacturing	29.9	29.7
Trade	27.6	27.1
Services	20.2	17.9
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	8.2	8.5

Source: California Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 2: figure 11, 37.

to use "qualified" braceros as tractor drivers as long as user-members secured a written permit from their nearest FPS office. The IVFA asserted such certification was necessary given "the exodus from the Valley of qualified domestic wheel tractor operators"—exactly the problem of displacement and domination Galarza and so many others had long been describing. Soon they received certification to use braceros on cattle feed grinders. This is remarkable. Only ten days before the tractor certification, bracero Ramon Contreras bled to death when his arm was sucked into a feed grinder—the second bracero to be killed in a year in the Imperial Valley while operating machinery. Mike Miranda, a sometime–labor contractor who worked closely with braceros in the Imperial—often translating for them as they prepared affidavits detailing the abuses to which they were subject—claimed that at the time of the death, more than fifty braceros were used to operate cattle feed grinders, even though none had been certified for that work, and (quite likely) few had been trained.[6]

distinguish between a domestic worker and an imported worker." Jameson to Knight, November 26, 1958; Knight to Jameson, December 12, 1958, both in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 13.

TABLE 11.2 Disabling (Lost Time) Farm-Work Injuries, California, 1961

Vehicles	2,136
Working Surfaces	2,040
Hand Tools	1,930
Containers	1,773
Ladders	1,449
Machines	1,194
Animals, Insects	1,026
Chemicals and Hot, Injurious Substances	966
Trees, Logs, Lumber	777
Miscellaneous	3,433
Total	16,724

Source: California Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 2: 37.

Crisis in the Program

Second-term Imperial Valley member of Congress D. S. Saund,* already "breathing fire and brimstone" about abuses in administration of PL 78, promised a full-fledged investigation not only of the death of Contreras, but of the whole program. It was a propitious moment. The newly elected Edmund G. (Pat) Brown gubernatorial administration also promised to clean house—indeed, it had been investigating abuses in the program "on the Governor's orders" since soon after his inauguration in January. Stanley Mosk, the new attorney general, was skeptical of the administration of the program, and the new director of the Department of Employment, John Carr, not only pledged the "maximum utilization of California's domestic farm labor" as a top priority, but also a full investigation into charges his department's FPS favored braceros over domestic workers in its everyday operations. Already by the time Contreras was killed, Mosk had sent an "agent" to the Imperial Valley to make "a thorough investigation of the entire situation there," presumably with the

* Dalip Singh Saund was the first Asian American elected as a full voting member of Congress, and the first Asian Indian elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

expectation that some fairly serious violations of law or policy would be found, since the assistant attorney general warned Galarza to be patient because "the compilation of facts and the legal establishment of evidence, as you well know, takes some time." In addition, Carr had been "personally investigating" abuses in his department.*[7]

By the end of July 1959, the facts had been compiled, the legal evidence had apparently been established, and the results were damning. Domestic workers "not only don't get a chance," declared the Department of Employment's John Carr when the results of the investigation were first made public, "but they are deliberately horned off by people in our department whose duties it is to assure them of their prior rights." Carr described a "shakedown racket" running out of the Department of Employment (especially in the southern part of the state), and intimated there had been serious "abuses of power" by its employees. "There may have been fraud or grand theft involved," though there was not quite enough evidence to prove that, he said. William Cunningham, assistant chief of farm placement in Los Angeles (the highest official in the Southland), was fired on July 28, 1959—for "dishonesty and cheating"—five days before his seventieth birthday when he would have reached mandatory retirement age. Cunningham had apparently been accepting gifts—fruit, vegetables, and whiskey—from Southern California growers, though none of the articles in the papers indicate what these gifts may have been in exchange for.† Press reports also said he had forced lower-ranking employees to "pick up personal gifts and then . . . to fill out false travel vouchers." According to Carr, the gifts were not "just a case of somebody accepting a grapefruit or a bottle of whiskey, or responding to ordinary California hospitality. It went to the point of regular, traditional, longtime abuse of power and authority. It went into a shakedown racket."[8]

A couple of days later, Don R. Park, FPS supervisor for San Diego and Imperial counties (who answered directly to Cunningham), abruptly resigned while

* If growers had sent congratulatory letters to Earl Warren upon his election urging him to immediately fire Carey McWilliams, Galarza wrote to Governor-Elect Brown telling him he had direct allegations to make against Edward Hayes and his administration of the FPS. It appears that, at least in part, these allegations did indeed spur Mosk and Carr's investigations. Galarza to Governor-Elect Brown, December 18, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 9. Just as Carr was beginning to publicize his findings about abuses in the Department of Employment, he was moved by Governor Brown to state finance director, with the proviso that he continue to investigate abuses in the bracero program. He was succeeded as director of the Department of Employment by Irving Perluss.

† The relevant records in the California State Archives have been removed.

being questioned by state investigators about his role in the "racket." His resignation was accepted "with prejudice" by the Department of Employment.* Within two weeks a third Southern California FPS employee had submitted his resignation, again accepted "with prejudice." This San Diego employee, Edwin Bird (who in turn answered to Park), accused the governor of going "after everybody that's a Republican" in the Department of Employment. He claimed he had been subjected to "brainwashing" by investigators. For his part, the governor made it clear that one reason for the vigor of the housecleaning was to assure domestic workers would have at least some chance of administrative protection in the wake of the legislative defeat of a minimum wage bill that the Brown administration had proposed. Brown had proposed a $1.25 an hour minimum wage—including for farm workers—but "compromised to a 90 cent floor for farm workers." Even so the legislature killed the bill "with the help of the farm lobby."†[9]

As the probe continued, Edward Hayes grew defiant. One day he told a reporter it was clear that no investigation was warranted: "if I had thought so I'd have investigated myself long ago." Two days later he said, "There's bound to be abuses in a program of this size but abuses are not widespread and we have carried out our job to the best of our abilities. I am not going to resign. They're going to have to fire me. I've done nothing to be ashamed of." Claiming that it was "kind of difficult to take exception to the head man in your department," Hayes told reporters that he had no idea where Carr got his information that the FPS "horned off" domestic workers. "I am in a position to guarantee that if a (domestic) worker is qualified, he can get a job." Hayes was not fired; instead, he was stripped of his authority in supervising the FPS and named "Chief of Planning and Program Development"—which papers uniformly called an "advisory post." Even after this reshuffling of authority, Hayes (who still had the responsibility for reporting on FPS activities to the State Board of Agriculture) defied

* According to one report, Park resigned "to avoid answering questions about recreational jaunts during duty hours." "Mosk Clears Most Farmers in Cheap-Labor Bribe Probe," *Long Beach Independent*, August 3, 1959, A16.

† No wonder growers were opposed. B. A. Harrigan, manager of IVFA, informed the members of the association at the end of 1959 that the Board of Directors had decided to raise the "prevailing wage" for all braceros contracted by the Association to seventy-five cents an hour, from the seventy cents it had been "for some years." Harrigan to members, November 23, 1959, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 5. According to his biographer, Brown's fervor for the rights of farm workers was quelled when his minimum wage bill "lost badly," and "in the years that followed Brown rarely challenged California agriculture. By his second term he abandoned his support for a state minimum wage, instead favoring [a] federal bill." Eventually, he even opposed the outright elimination of the bracero program. Rarick, *California Rising*, 351.

the administration, complaining that the reshuffling of the FPS and its attendant publicity had induced a labor shortage in peaches and other crops. The acting director of the Department of Employment at the time of the harvest demurred. He blamed any shortages on low wages offered by growers.[10]

Eventually, twelve FPS employees were given letters of reprimand for accepting gifts from farmers.* Irving Perluss, Carr's replacement as director of the Department of Employment, told reporters that much of the misbehavior was condoned and encouraged by Cunningham, and that new rules governing ethical behavior in the program had been drafted. Despite his promises, Hayes resigned a few months later—but not before he had secured a post as the secretary-treasurer and manager of the Imperial Valley Farmers Association.[11]

The FPS, however, had not been the sole focus of the new Brown administration's investigation into abuses related to the bracero program. Indeed, according to Assistant Attorney General O'Brien, the discovery of abuses within the service was the result of discoveries made in the course of a rather differently focused investigation. Investigators had begun by examining allegations of abuse in the nonoccupational insurance program, but "the thing mushroomed when investigators began to see certain other things." In addition to abuses of power by FPS staff, those "other things" included "evidence that [a] number of farmers have pocketed funds—food allowance money and accidental insurance premiums—that belonged to their imported Mexican laborers." O'Brien suggested that there had been, by some farmers, "specific penal code violations." Finally, he said the attorney general's office had received complaints that "some small farmers have been forced to kick back money to certain growers associations in order to obtain braceros."[12]

At the heart of the investigation was the question of wages—and the processes that led to bracero domination of crop-areas. A special investigator reporting to Assistant Attorney General O'Brien argued, "any dominated area is, ipso facto, an example of the malfunctioning of the program. The very existence of a dominated area proves in itself that there has been a breakdown in the application of controls provided in Public Law 78 and the [international] Agreement." Moreover, "domination builds on itself, for as increasing numbers of aliens are used the growers become more and more dependent upon them to the exclusion of the domestics. The end result is such a domination by foreign workers that it closely represents a closed shop status." It also led, this

* The Senate Fact Finding Committee described it this way: "A great many of the Farm Placement Service's personnel had accepted gifts from growers, a practice which was a matter of course in the Service and which was condoned by the Service's supervisors." *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 146.

investigator argued, not only to lowered wages (and less money circulating in dominated communities) but also to inevitable abuses in other aspects of the program, such as feeding, nonoccupational health insurance, and occupational medical care. Indeed, he found, among other things, that growers in the Imperial Valley routinely doctored their payrolls,* reporting that individual braceros refused work when in fact they had not been assigned work (growers did not have to pay contractually guaranteed subsistence wages to Mexican Nationals who refused to work)—a "practice [that] fitted in with the maintenance of an over-supply of braceros in pool-camps"; that this surplus had the added benefit of ensuring large profits to operators of mess halls in camps—the IVFA made, according to an audit, a profit of $108,201.39 (or about 25¢ per man-day) for the year ending April 1, 1959, on its nonprofit feeding operation; that growers associations (or their managers) made handsome profits from charging small farmers for access to braceros, especially "specials"—Ivan Wood of San Diego County Farmers, Inc. apparently received enough $20 checks to earn $25,800 in fiscal year 1957–58 and $25,070 in 1958–59, checks that he cashed at various locales throughout San Diego and El Centro "except for a few checks which were deposited into Mr. Woods' personal account"; and that "gratuities" of between $250 and $500 a year were paid by associations and farmers to employees of Armand C. Feichtmeir & Company, the local agent for the Continental Casualty Company, the primary provider of nonoccupational health insurance for the program, presumably to cover the fact that some growers were simply pocketing the insurance premiums and never taking out the required insurance policies.[13]

Whatever the violations—and they were many—for John Carr (testifying before the California Senate), the bracero program was "inherently vicious." Indeed, "Public Law 78 is in itself unsound," Carr testified, "and is difficult if not impossible to administer in compliance with its own terms," exactly the charge that Galarza and NAWU had long been making. Now, though, NAWU was joined (and was on its way to being supplanted) by the nascent, but better funded Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), which had been proving effective in keeping pressure on the Brown administration to either clean up or eliminate the bracero program (see the following chapter). The efforts of Fred Ross's CSO (which now counted César Chávez among its members and which

* Shoddy—or more accurately, fraudulent—bookkeeping had been exposed before, such as when new state assemblyman (and later powerful member of Congress and master politician) Phillip Burton caught a grower red-handed—actually in the act of doctoring the books—during an impromptu visit to a labor camp following a hearing on farm worker conditions in Stockton; see Jacobs, *Rage for Justice*, 76–77.

would soon add Dolores Huerta to its roster) were also important. The combined pressure of these organizations and the now almost-daily revelation in the press of abuses within the program, together with general skepticism within the first Brown administration about the value of continuing to import Mexican workers, forced the USDL and the BES to also begin focusing on abuses in the program and to actually begin enforcing laws and its own policies, even if the BES's immediate response to the unfolding state investigation sounded rather befuddled. "We are definitely concerned," the BES's Glenn Brockway told reporters, "as to whether or not the state really provided adequate placement services for the Mexicans," seemingly forgetting that while the FPS certified the need for braceros, its primary task was not placing "the Mexicans," but *domestic* farm workers. Nonetheless, by August 6, the BES made a show of "decertifying" a prominent user-member of the Coachella Valley Farmers Association for repeatedly hiring braceros over domestics despite several warnings from BES agents. While papers suggest that this may have been the first time a grower was actually banned from using braceros, that was not entirely accurate: Joseph Maggio, "The Carrot King" of the Imperial Valley, had temporarily lost his certification in 1951. Even so, such decertifications were indeed vanishingly rare. Prompted by such BES actions, growers associations, always willing to claim they adequately policed their user-members, actually started to do so in some instances.[14]

In San Francisco to speak at the annual convention of the AFL-CIO in September, Labor Secretary James P. Mitchell made a surprise inspection of four bracero camps in the Santa Clara Valley, in the wake of which he ordered one—operated by the Progressive Growers Association and housing 121 braceros—to be closed. Saying of the camps he saw, "there is only one word to describe them—filthy," Mitchell averred that there was "no excuse for these neighbors of ours from Mexico not receiving the adequate housing required by our agreement with the Mexican government." According to one of the news reports of his inspection tour, Mitchell implied that "California agriculture, richest in the nation, should spend some of its profits to improve conditions in the Mexican farm labor camps." Mitchell's move against Progressive Growers puzzled some state officials. An inspector for DoH, Herman Kalish, argued, no doubt accurately, that the closed camp "was probably no better nor worse than many of [Santa Clara] county's 400 labor camps." He said that he would not have closed the camp, even though it was in violation of standards, especially since it was scheduled to be open for only another two weeks while the harvest was completed.[15]

But, apparently, the USDL was on a publicity campaign, and two weeks later

it ordered two more camps closed—another "dilapidated" Progressive Growers' camp near San Jose housing sixty-eight Mexican Nationals and a camp operated by a vice president of the California Farm Bureau Federation in Marysville and housing forty-one. This second camp was closed—declared by the USDL to be "very unsanitary"—at the same time the forty-one braceros walked off their job complaining they were only making four dollars for an eight-hour day after being assigned to a third picking of a tomato field at eighteen cents a box. The CFBF vice president denied both that the workers were dissatisfied and that the camp had been closed for sanitary reasons, averring instead that unseasonably cool weather had led the braceros to complain about a lack of heat in their barracks, and that he was happy to accommodate their request to move to a heated camp. Whatever the truth of the vice president's claims, he was decertified before the following season for repeated violations of the terms of the program and banned from using braceros. Yet another camp, this one housing seven hundred braceros, was closed by BES two days later. Brockway ordered this old FPC-built camp on the grounds of the Stockton Air Field to be shuttered because of unsanitary conditions. Four hundred of the workers were allowed to return a few days later after the camp manager made repairs. And two days after that, another old FPC camp on an airfield (this one near Dos Palos in Merced County) was also closed, displacing 226 Mexican Nationals.* The more than one thousand braceros displaced in this single week were all adequately rehoused, according to a USDL spokesman.[16]

In all, 144 growers association camps were closed in California in 1959 (in 1958, 129 camps were closed in the whole of the western region), and more than 1,000 (of 4,705) were threatened with closure if they were not drastically improved. Brockway, testifying at a State Senate hearing, said the Department of Labor was fed up with the whole farming industry "getting a black eye because

* Conditions were bad enough at some camps in the Dos Palos area that a local jury found at least one camp operator guilty of violations of several sections of the California Labor Code—a very rare occurrence indeed. The judge sentenced him to two years' probation, one stipulation of which was the immediate closing of the camp and its being brought into compliance with code as certified by the Department of Housing. Decision, Rollin A. Moore, Judge of the Justice Court, Dos Palos Judicial District, n.d. [ca. July 8, 1959], Division of Housing Records, File 63. Of course, these "slipshod conditions" were hardly a surprise to anyone. The previous year Robert Goodwin, the BES director in Washington, had ordered a special inspection of all camps in the Imperial Valley that revealed, once again, that farmers in that region were not infrequently refusing to provide even beds for their workers, and that when they did they were often dilapidated, that other camps had no running water (much less flush toilets), and so forth. Joe Brown, "Transportation a Bracero Problem," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 22, 1959, 2.

of the malfeasance of a few," and that the closures were necessary because "the program cannot stand continued violation." Indeed, it was just this sense that the program was under threat because of its maladministration and constant violation that led Labor Secretary Mitchell to commission the consultants' report on the working of the bracero program discussed in the previous chapter.[17]

As he described the scope of the camp closings, Brockway also announced that two growers associations in Ventura County—the Somis Farm Labor Association and the Campo Blanco Association—had been banned from bracero use.* Three others were at the risk of losing their certification, but were in the midst of appealing. While these three others could not be named, Brockway said, he gave enough information to make it clear that one was the Progressive Growers Association (the other two were a citrus association in Southern California and a tree-crop association in Northern California). This was not the first time Progressive Growers had been close to being sanctioned. Only a few months earlier, the USDL and the consul general of Mexico at San Francisco issued a Final Joint Determination, finding on the basis of wage surveys that Progressive Growers and its members were paying Mexican Nationals ten cents below *its own* announced "prevailing wage" of one dollar an hour. When this discrepancy was discovered, Progressive Growers and its user-members were "requested" to prepare "supplemental payrolls" to restore back pay to the chiseled workers. Growers refused, and a Joint Determination was prepared declaring the Progressive Growers and its members guilty of "knowingly and wilfully [sic] violating" both the international agreement and the standard

* In May 1959, Brockway considered declaring the Somis Farm Labor Association ineligible to contract braceros. It appears that the main issues were the inability of the association to police its user-members; the practice of both the association and its members of giving priority to Mexican National workers over domestic workers; failure to pay the prevailing wage; and inadequate food quality and quantity (and perhaps profiteering). Instead of decertifying the association (in which case association members said they would reconstitute themselves under a new name and new articles of incorporation, but with essentially the same personnel), Brockway made a "declaration of conditional eligibility" that stipulated a set of requirements to be met and a regime of reporting and inspections for the period from June to mid-November if the association was to remain eligible after that date. It is unclear where Brockway found the authority to make this declaration as the relevant portion of the Migrant Labor Agreement (Article 7) only provides for declarations of ineligibility. The Mexican Consulate reserved its right to unilaterally declare the Somis Farm Labor Association ineligible (an act provided for under Article 7). It is not clear whether Somis's final decertification was due to its failure to live up to agreed-to stipulations or a declaration of ineligibility by the Mexican Consulate. Minutes of meeting of Somis Farm Labor Association officials and the regional director, Bureau of Employment Region X, San Francisco, May 25, 1959, NARA, RG 174 (accessed online, ARC Identifier: 296748; accessed August 26, 2006).

work contract. The growers appealed on the grounds that neither the USDL nor the Mexican consul had statutory authority to "compel compliance" with the agreement nor to inspect employment records. In the Final Joint Determination, the authorities in fact agreed with this claim, but said it was moot in that the Progressive Growers Association and its user-members had entered into a contract with the government, and by that contract had agreed to the terms of the international agreement and the standard work contract, both of which provided for the inspection of records. The Progressive Growers Association and its members were ordered to make back pay, but its right to procure more braceros was never questioned.[18]

Brockway, like Carr, had made his comments about the problem of a program in constant noncompliance in testimony before special hearings of a California Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, chaired by James Cobey (D-Merced). At the height of the summer harvest, as Carr and O'Brien were making their revelations, and as growers were complaining of what one paper called the worst farm labor shortage since World War II, but which labor union officials blamed on depressed wage scales, the CFBF had asked Cobey's committee to examine the labor supply question. Cobey instead declared his committee would "conduct a comprehensive fact finding investigation" that would provide a "general overall historical and economic investigation into the farm labor situation throughout the state." And it did. In part replicating the work of the Governor's Committee that studied agricultural resources in the San Joaquin Valley in 1950, the Cobey Committee held hearings around the state in late 1959 and early 1960 and commissioned reports from the major state agencies involved in agriculture. It also produced two comprehensive and valuable reports exposing the structure of agribusiness in California, its capitalization of the basis of cheap labor, and the history of struggle and change that made it what it was. Like nearly all the other reports—official and unofficial—produced about the nature of farming in California this one proved far more valuable to later scholars than it did to activists, reformers, or government officials working at the time to remake that nature.[19]

More important to the nature of the bracero program—and the structure of the farming landscape in California—was the growing scrutiny of, and pressure placed on, the operation of the labor importation program by local activists, citizens organizations, and a labor movement somewhat rejuvenated by the election of the Brown administration in California in 1958 and the Kennedy administration nationally in 1960, and especially, finally (as the following chapter will show), a concerted, if still at times halting, commitment from the national labor establishment to support the organization of farm workers.

The Struggles of Dr. Ben Yellen . . .

The death of cattle-feed operator Ramon Contreras was one of the proximate causes of the increased scrutiny on the bracero program during the summer of 1959. According to his widow, Josefina, at the time of his death Contreras had been making only sixty cents an hour. She also claimed the Mexican consul pressured her to sign a set of papers and when she refused ("I did not trust the Mexican Consul" and "my friends advised me not to sign any papers until I got myself an attorney") the consul threatened to cancel the death benefit she was owed. Josefina was assisted in her efforts to get the injustice of her husband's death publicized, to receive back pay up to the prevailing wage, and to obtain her death benefit by labor contractor Mike Miranda and his friend, Brawley doctor Benjamin Yellen.[20]

Yellen had come to California from New York as a physician for the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.* Settling in Brawley for his health, Yellen worked mostly with low-income residents, and in that capacity occasionally treated braceros. But in 1957, Yellen began refusing to treat braceros contracted to the Desert Growers Association because this association covered nonoccupational health insurance through the Continental Casualty Insurance Company, for which Armand Feichtmeir representing Pan American Underwriters was the agent. According to Yellen, in a letter to the State Insurance Commission, Continental Casualty did not pay promptly, and often did not pay at all. He also complained that the DGA charged braceros $4 a month for insurance, when the IVFA, which provided insurance through the Constitution Life Insurance Company, charged only $2.70. Oddly, Yellen's letter of complaint, written to the California Insurance Commission in Sacramento, quickly ended up in the hands of Armand Feichtmeir himself, who responded within a day from Los Angeles, threatening Yellen with a suit "because of the numerous false and defamatory statements contained" in the letter. There is no evidence a suit was

* Yellen is most famous for his campaign to have enforced the 1902 Reclamation Act, which limited farms receiving federally subsidized water to 160 acres. As an amicus curiae to the case *United States v. Imperial Irrigation District* (1980), Yellen played a central role in shaping arguments—eventually accepted by the U.S. Supreme Court—that the Reclamation Act did indeed apply in the Imperial Valley. In the wake of the decision Senator Alan Cranston pushed a bill through Congress—passed on the last day of the session—exempting the Imperial from the law, nullifying the Supreme Court decision. A brief biography of Yellen is available at http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/testing/html/msso193d.html (accessed August 13, 2009). A fuller discussion of Yellen's role in and relationship to California farm labor movements will soon be found in Matthew Garcia's forthcoming book *A Moveable Feast*.

ever filed. After a number of other letters from Yellen to the insurance commissioner, an investigator from the Department of Insurance (which was not convinced it actually had jurisdiction) visited the Valley to investigate—apparently after consulting with Feichtmeir and others. The only tangible result of the investigation seemed to be a letter to Yellen promising that necessary insurance forms would be provided to him by Continental more quickly in the future.* "This should . . . eliminate the difficulty you have been having on this part of the program," the department told Yellen. It did not.[21]

Yellen's complaint originated when the bracero Ezequiel Arismendi Arismendi came to him for treatment after first being required to seek medical help at the DGA camp in Brawley. There Arismendi had been treated by an unlicensed nurse working under the auspices of, but apparently without much supervision from, a local doctor. Yellen was appalled by the treatment Arismendi had received, suspecting the nurse and doctor of malpractice.† Not only did Continental Casualty refuse to pay Yellen for the medical services he rendered Arismendi, DGA and Pan American Underwriters quickly moved against Arismendi, seeking and eventually securing his deportation. With the deportation, a civil suit Arismendi had filed against DGA and the camp clinic for faulty medical services was rendered moot. For Yellen, Arismendi's case and the abuses it seemed to shed light on became a cause, even a crusade.

With other budding activists in the Imperial Valley, he formed a series of organizations dedicated to protecting the rights of Arismendi in the first instance, and then more generally braceros and the small-time merchants (home cooks, grocers, etc.) who served them. He began to make early morning trips to various labor camps and, using a loudspeaker attached to his car, implore braceros to know their rights, including especially their right to go to a doctor of their own choice, paid for out of their medical insurance programs. He

* Internally, an employee of the State Department of Insurance conceded to a member of the governor's staff that braceros were frequently overcharged for insurance, but that overpayments might have been "made unintentionally or through error by the employers, without the knowledge of the Continental Casualty Company." The subsequent discovery of "gratuities" paid to Feichtmeir and others makes this doubtful. Thomas to Gilliss, April 23, 1958, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 13.

† A judge ruling on one aspect of the resulting case declared the doctor and unlicensed nurse to be "responsible for the worst medical abuse I have ever heard of," even if the nurse was technically innocent of the charge of practicing medicine without a license. Filing *Before the Judicial Committee of the California Medical Association in the Matter of the Appeal of Dr. Benjamin L. Yellen . . .* , n.d. [1959]; "Yellen, Ruiz Innocent," *Brawley News*, July 19, 1958, both in Yellen Papers, Box 34, File 4. See also statement of Pizano Farjado, Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19 (copy also in Calisphere).

produced a series of "yellow sheets"—tightly typed, legal-sized mimeographed handbills exposing the depredations Yellen and his associates found and presumed as a part of the importation program—that he handed out at camp gates and around town advising braceros and domestic workers alike of their rights. Working with Mike Miranda, he took dozens of sworn, notarized statements about work, living, and medical conditions from braceros, domestic workers, and cooks who served this population. And he engaged in an extensive letter-writing campaign to congressional representatives, federal officials, union activists, and others. As his investigations into the medical insurance program (and the shoddy medical treatment braceros were often given) advanced, Yellen also uncovered what he deemed to be illegal profiteering in the camp feeding programs (as well as illegal requirements that braceros eat in camps and not patronize "home cooks"), withheld or skimmed pay, illegal use of braceros in skilled positions, and a range of other abuses, large and small.[22]

Yellen's efforts quickly drew the wrath of the Imperial Valley establishment. For his advocacy of Arismendi's case against the unlicensed nurse, the insurance broker, and the INS (for illegal deportation), Yellen was charged with practicing law without a license—a charge for which he was found innocent.* For his exhortations outside the gates of labor camps, he was hauled before the Imperial Valley Medical Society and charged—by the doctor who presumably had been overseeing the DGA clinic—with unethical behavior. Specifically, he was charged with making defamatory remarks against another doctor and directly soliciting patients. According to his accuser, Yellen committed both transgressions in "broadcasts" "outside the dispensary of the Desert Growers," he directly threatened to "get" the doctor, and he "caused to be printed in the Valley newspaper an article which cast me in unjust, adverse public opinion" by filing a suit against the doctor for "swindling" braceros. The transcripts of the broadcasts do not support the charge Yellen was soliciting patients or defaming the other doctor, but there is ample evidence that there was little love lost between the two doctors. Whatever the evidence, Yellen was duly expelled from the Medical Society and barred from practicing at the Pioneer Medical Hospital in Brawley.†[23]

* The nurse was simultaneously found innocent of practicing medicine without a license. "Yellen, Ruiz Innocent," *Brawley News*, July 19, 1958, Yellen Papers, Box 34, File 4.

† Yellen succeeded in interesting famed attorney Melvyn Belli in his case in particular and the plight of Imperial Valley braceros in general. Belli seriously contemplated a class-action suit on behalf of bracero workers chiseled out of insurance premiums, meal payments, and wages. Through his ceaseless activism, and especially his constant public airing of his grievances in the case, Yellen fairly quickly alienated Belli. Nonetheless, one of Belli's associates ended up

Despite and because of this sanction, Yellen remained pugnacious, ferreting out abuses in the bracero program wherever he found them, ranging from profiteering in the feeding programs, to continued abuse in the health insurance program, to unjust deportations of braceros and other workers. Like many he grew increasingly concerned about the dangerous conditions under which braceros were transported from camp to farm, noting what seemed to be an increase in accidents involving trucks and buses full of farm workers. He announced his candidacy as a Republican for Congress on a platform of worker rights, the defense of small farmers, and community development. And a year later, he was arrested and jailed for ten days (without possibility for bail) for misdemeanor disturbing the peace when he attempted to prevent the Border Patrol from questioning passengers on the Greyhound bus he was riding on—an altercation for which he was forced to ask his attorney forbearance in paying his bill since "I am under boycott by the big farmers and business for me is not good." His own worst enemy, Yellen nonetheless succeeded in shining harsh light on conditions in the Imperial Valley in general and in the bracero program there in particular. His agitating was surely one of the roots of the Brown administration's close focus on the administration of the program in Southern California, and in particular its investigations into the activities of the Continental Casualty Company and Armand Feichtmeir.[24]

. . . And of Henry Anderson

Dr. Ben Yellen and his small band of comrades were not alone in bringing conditions in Imperial Valley to public light. Also at work in the Valley was University of California Berkeley School of Public Health graduate student Henry Anderson.* In 1956, Anderson had received a sizable grant from the National Institutes of Health to undertake a study of health customs among braceros. He planned to interview 2,500 braceros before they entered the United States and again on their return to Mexico in an effort to understand the degree to which health perspectives and practices were altered by workers' time in the United States. After a season of field testing his survey in Stockton and training native

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acting as Yellen's attorney on numerous occasions. Among others, see Yellen to Belli, February 22, 1959; Belli to Yellen, March 17, 1959, both in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4; Petherbridge to Yellen, September 19, 1959, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 5.

* Ernesto Galarza had encouraged Yellen to contact Anderson and work closely with him in his campaigns, but there is no evidence that Yellen ever followed through. See Galarza to Yellen, June 6, 1958, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 3.

Spanish-speaking interviewers, and in the wake of being denied permission by the Mexican government to interview prospective braceros in Michoacán, Anderson took up residence in El Centro with permission to interview workers at the reception center that was the final stop for many braceros before they were sent north into the central or coastal valleys.[25]

According to historian Gilbert Gonzalez, one of Anderson's early attempts at understanding the context within which he was questioning the workers took the form of an escorted tour of the border reception center at Calexico (one stop before the El Centro center). At the Calexico center he was taken to the "bullpen," where thousands of men awaited processing. The bullpen reminded Anderson of "the slave markets as I imagined they existed a hundred years ago in Baltimore, or Charleston, or New Orleans." Especially appalling was the "strutting little peacock" of a guide who pronounced on the fitness for farm work of each *aspirante* they passed. In the wake of his tour, Anderson wrote in his diary, "The bracero system is wicked. It was wicked for my country to be involved in it." Nonetheless, he continued his research—while stepping up his criticisms of the program. In April 1958, he wrote to Galarza about conditions in the Imperial, noting that there was no need for a conspiracy between the FPS and IVFA to prove that all domestic workers were "winos" (one of Galarza's perennial complaints), because "the inflexible 70¢ an hour rule . . . does the job quite effectively. No family man, no homeowner, no one with a stake in the community, can possibly work under that condition." He indicated he too had found abuses in the insurance program, repeating the charge that the DGA seemed to be cooking the books in collusion with Pan American Underwriters. And he detailed ways he thought an informal ban on the use of braceros north of the Tehachapis (because of high unemployment) was being flouted through the use of "specials"* and by requiring braceros to remain when their contracts expired. He ended his long letter to Galarza noting the arrest of an Imperial Valley Health Department employee who was charged with taking bribes to doctor blood samples taken in conjunction with the "specials" program, and saying: "Ah me . . . Local health departments, USPHS,† USDL, insur-

* With Mexican consent, the BES allowed growers to name a number of "special" braceros—particularly skilled workers, usually—who could be recruited annually by name, were often given contracts for periods longer than that specified in the international agreement, and otherwise were exceptions to the stated policy that braceros were to be used as temporary and unskilled labor.

† U.S. Public Health Service. In another letter Anderson relays a story of a disgruntled U.S. Public Health Service employee who claimed an INS agent arranged for the forced, unpaid work of two braceros to dig a sewer line at the INS agent's home. Anderson noted that the

ance companies, consulates, FPS . . . No agency associated with the *bracero* program emerges without taint. There is a curious quality of moral decay about this program . . . an almost limitless power to corrupt. It must be stopped, for moral reasons if no other . . ." (ellipses in original).[26]

Already known because of his preliminary research, his contacts with Galarza, Father Thomas McCullough (a priest to braceros in Stockton), and others, Anderson was invited in May 1958 to contribute a "statement of opinion" to a meeting of the American Friends Service Committee's Farm Labor Project in Tulare. Anderson agreed to write a statement. Repeating and amplifying the claims and analysis he made in his letter to Galarza the month before and entitled, "Social Justice and Foreign Contract Labor: A Statement of Opinion of Conscience," Anderson's statement was a highly personal,* scathing indictment of the program as a whole that argued that no amount of tinkering could fix the systemic problems at its heart, systemic problems indicated by the routine bureaucratic abuses—and abuses to human dignity—that were, Anderson thought, the very core of the program. After cataloging these abuses,† Anderson asserted that continuance of the program "means we subscribe to the assumption that laborers may properly be shipped as a commodity in international trade, with few if any of the freedoms (e.g. the freedom of movement) so deeply engrained in the American tradition we customarily take them for granted." Moreover, "I am convinced that the *bracero* program—indeed, foreign contract farm labor programs in general—indeed, contract labor, *per se*—in whatever form and guise, will by its very nature wreak harm upon the lives of the persons directly and indirectly involved and upon human rights which our Constitution still holds to be self-evident and inalienable. I am convinced that foreign labor programs must be extirpated root and branch, and that temporizing with them is as immoral as the programs themselves." Anderson concluded that a just end

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U.S. Public Health Service employee had an axe to grind since officials at the El Centro center were beginning to crack down on bribe taking. Anderson concluded: "Thieves are really falling out at the El Centro Reception Center." Anderson to Galarza, May 9, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3.

* Anderson later said that he had "tailor-made" the statement, focusing particularly on the moral aspects of the program, because it had been solicited by the Quakers, for whom these issues were paramount. Anderson to Galarza, November 5, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3.

† For half a dozen of the ten tightly typed pages, Anderson detailed instance after instance of abusive practices in the program, documenting and amplifying charges against the program made for nearly a decade by Galarza and other critics. Henry Anderson, "Social Justice and Foreign Contract Labor: A Statement of Opinion and Conscience," May 21, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 4.

to the bracero program would require confronting the deep poverty in Mexico that made the program so attractive to so many *aspirantes*, and would require some means to replace (at the least) the thirty million dollars braceros remitted to Mexico annually.[27]

Anderson could not attend the meeting, but he prepared and sent along his statement, with the request that it not be publicly distributed, and that if it was, his name be removed. Also invited to the meeting were what Anderson called "some zealous proponents of the bracero system." Despite his request that his statement not be disseminated, one of the participants in the meeting, an employee of the FPS, provided a copy of his statement to Edward Hayes, then still more than a year away from being reassigned. The backlash against Anderson was swift. Following "a flurry of memos" among the FPS, BES, CFBF, the governor's office, and the UC College of Agriculture in early July, Anderson and his assistant were barred from conducting research at the Empalme recruiting station (Mexico had earlier relented on its ban on Anderson's research),* and he stood "to be kicked out of the El Centro center immediately," as he reported to Galarza. Anderson received a barrage of letters from officials in the bracero program—from H. W. Stewart in the Department of Employment and the BES's H. D. Huxley, among others—demanding Anderson appear to present evidence of his charges (or retract them), and in mid-August he was "ordered to report to Berkeley to show cause why my project should not be terminated," as he told Galarza. Anderson continued:

> My immediate supervisor has let me know that "high sources outside" (he does not name them; he does not need to) have indicated that the price of my job is a retraction, released "through the same channels as gave out your original statement, a modification of your expressed views making it clear that they were neither specific charges nor sweeping generalizations and that your information was for the most part indirect and hearsay." In other words, to continue my association with the Great Institution of Higher Learning, and the Pursuit of Truth, I must lie. Everyone at the University takes it for granted that I will give Hayes and Brockway what they want. I assure you they have a shock in store. . . . The University is desperately anxious to avoid a fight, but I am afraid I am not going to be able to oblige them.

* Gonzalez indicates that Anderson's assistant was eventually allowed to resume work at Empalme, but only after being threatened and having to promise that he was not interested in gathering information of bribe-taking practices there. The experiences were harrowing enough that the assistant decided to return to the United States rather than continue the research. Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 125.

Anderson thus hoped Galarza would help him alert sympathetic politicians "who might be interested in the curious spectacle of a young research associate about to be fired for telling the truth."[28]

Anderson refused to appear at the Berkeley inquest,* but nonetheless for a time there seemed to be no ill effects. Indeed, on September 3, 1958, Anderson told Galarza that it looked like the tempest was, if not blowing over, then resolving itself into "a sort of cold war of nerves." He was too sanguine. On September 8, the Berkeley chancellor and the School of Public Health told Anderson to stop research immediately. Simultaneously, Anderson's interviewer was kicked out of the El Centro processing center on "orders from Washington." Anderson himself was apparently threatened with arrest if he appeared at the El Centro center. He was allowed by his Berkeley supervisors to "write up" the data he already had in hand, but he was barred from conducting any further research on the project at all. UC President Clark Kerr supported the decision.[29]

Despite feelings of guilt, disillusionment, and self-recrimination induced by the whole process, Anderson spent the next year and a half writing up his findings, sometimes engaging in "clandestine interviewing."† Indeed, despite the ban on further research, he returned to the Imperial Valley for follow-up research. (On one such trip, in November, he encountered the freezing conditions and "unvarnished display of inhumanity" discussed in the previous chapter.) When Anderson finally submitted his report ("The Bracero Program in California: With Particular Reference to Health Status, Attitudes and Practices")—all 850 pages of it—it was rejected by his advisory committee (with the exception of Paul Taylor, who found it "excellent") for being too far removed from the topic of public health, focusing as it did on the larger structural and social conditions within which public health was shaped.‡ The School of Public Health ordered

* The pressure on him came in the midst of the loyalty oath controversy in Berkeley and Anderson professed himself unconcerned about whether he would keep his job or not. "Having seen the way the University conceives of academic freedom at first hand, I don't believe that even a complete retraction and apology from the Bureau of Employment Security and the Farm Placement Service would induce me to stay in an atmosphere of such hypocrisy and dry rot." Anderson to Galarza, August 19, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3.

† Perhaps one reason for his dogged insistence in seeing the aborted project through was his growing sense, based on discussion with USDL staff, and reported to Galarza in November, that "the whole affair is a personal vendetta being waged by [H. D.] Huxley." Anderson to Galarza, November 5, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3.

‡ Anderson writes of the "irony" that even as his report was being rejected the School of Public Health "was proudly offering a course . . . which was devoted to demonstrating that health cannot be intelligently considered in isolation from occupation, income, housing, diet, culture, social structure—precisely the factors I included in the monograph. Classroom

all copies destroyed (shredded and burned "on or about the Fourth of July, 1960," as Anderson sardonically put it, in the incinerator of the School of Public Health, "a building which, ironically enough, is named for an eminent civil libertarian, Chief Justice Earl Warren") with the exception of a personal copy allowed Anderson, which was to be marked "Confidential" and from which the names of all committee members were to be removed. The university also demanded Anderson return to it all transcripts and other research material, which, Gonzalez reports, are still nowhere to be found. A highly abridged version of the report, without what he thought were the key chapters (on "Healthways and Cultural Change" and "The Social System") was given limited distribution to public health and other officials. And in 1964, "with the help of a number of friends," Anderson re-created the destroyed report in its entirety and through Citizens for Farm Labor, of which he was chair, distributed one hundred mimeographed copies under the title *Harvest of Loneliness: An Inquiry into a Social Problem*. By then, though, Anderson's academic career had come to an end.[30]

Dead Labor: Structural Violence

The substance of Anderson's charges in his "Statement of Conscience"—from the specific abuses outlined to "the curious quality of moral decay"—were soon borne out by Attorney General Mosk's investigation into the program that began only a few months after Anderson's banishment from UC, as well as the investigations by Carr and the Senate Fact-Finding Committee that followed quickly on Mosk's heels. Secretary of Labor Mitchell's campaign against bad camp conditions likewise shed harsh light on the ordinary workings of the bracero program. For once, growers seemed to be, at least to some degree, on the defensive, constantly having to justify their practices and shore up their good names, not only internally against broadsides like Galarza's *Strangers in Our Fields*, but publicly, in the press. The program was too valuable to do anything else. If workers dying on—or on the way to—the job were, seemingly, an in-

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discussion, evidently is one thing; the real-life world quite another" (*Harvest of Loneliness*, 8n2). Gonzalez (*Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 132) quotes a letter of Clark Kerr's (privately held by Henry Anderson) in which the UC president averred that the report was comprised mostly of "material . . . not relevant to the basic study, especially in terms of the NIH grant." But in his references this letter is dated February 15, 1958, which is before the controversy over the statement erupted. The portions of the letter Gonzalez quotes, however, indicate that it was written after Anderson submitted his report, and Gonzalez himself indicated that it was "written several years later."

evitable feature of California agribusiness during the bracero era, such literally dead labor was not, in fact, the kind growers truly desired. What they wanted, and what the bracero program helped to deliver, was the kind of dead labor Marx described so scathingly, and accurately, in *Capital*: labor ossified or concretized in the form of commodities, commodities in this case pulled out of the soil and shipped far and wide to grace the grocery store aisles and tables of a hungry nation. Dead labor *absorbed* living labor; it consumed it. Braceros were, for many growers, now the most highly desired living labor to be consumed—in part because in its, often quite literal, consumption, growers could get away with so much.*

By some accounts about 80 percent of farm work in the Imperial—of all kinds—was done by braceros, and the Imperial was now at its agribusiness zenith: a massively productive, massively profitable (and massively subsidized) desert in nearly year-round bloom, shipping cotton, lettuce, cantaloupes, citrus, asparagus, carrots, wheat, barley, hay, sugar beets, and dozens of other crops, as well as milk and eggs, all around the country, often when other sections were still snowbound or just coming into production. All that dead labor, that "immense accumulation of commodities," all that profit, were made possible by living laborers who were braceros. But as figurative dead labor was more and more transmuted into literal dead labor—with accident and death rates in agriculture on the rise, with both explicable and inexplicable deaths among braceros continuing to make headlines, with the structural violence that was everyday life for farm workers and that had been instantiated precisely as an effect of the everyday workings of the bracero program steadily doing its work—and as the consequent public attention on the internal workings brought unwanted publicity to it, the program seemed now to be more vulnerable than it ever had been in the past.[31]

Such a sense of vulnerability is no doubt at the root of the severity of the action taken against critics of the program, like Dr. Ben Yellen and Henry Anderson. It also provides an explanation for why even such severe actions—stripping one of much of his ability to practice medicine and shutting the other out of the halls of academe and trying to destroy not just his research project,

* Even when the USES or other agencies made a show of cracking down on abuses in the program, they tended to warn growers in advance, so they would have a chance to stop—or hide—their worst abuses before inspectors arrived. Even better, they could count on allies in other branches of the government to ride to their rescue, both in the constant public relations battles over the program, and in the internal battles over how to govern it. See, for example, Crittenden to Norton, March 24, 1960; Harris to Earl, April 25, 1960; Earl to Nelson, April 29, 1960; Earl to Nelson, May 24, 1960, all in DIR, DoH Records, File 63.

but much of the data he collected—were quite ineffectual. Neither shut up. Yellen kept agitating, and Anderson soon joined the fledgling Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, which was poised to become a significant (if ultimately fleeting) force in the struggles over what the relationship between figurative dead labor and literal dead labor was going to be in the fields as the program, and the nation, were poised to enter the "new frontier" that was the 1960s.

Property

Contract Farming, Contract Labor

"FARMERS," WRITES GEOGRAPHER JULIE GUTHMAN, "are essentially price-takers, especially when faced with crops about to perish." Because of that (among numerous other factors), Guthman argues, innovation—taking the forms of intensification (speeding up production and reducing "the risks of biological production"), appropriation (hiving off some processes and subjecting them to factory-production processes: the rise of food processing or fertilizer industries, for example), and valorization ("finding new ways to enhance the desire for the product itself as opposed to intensifying the creation of value or extracting value from others")—is a constant in that most traditional of economic activities: farming. Added to this, of course, is the constant struggle to lower the cost of labor and thus raise the rate of exploitation and therefore increase surplus-value production. As Guthman points out, however, any gains made through intensification, appropriation, and valorization tend to be temporary, as competition leads others to adopt the same innovations. Against all odds, agriculture is a highly dynamic field.[1]

Not that it feels that way to growers. For them it is a highly *insecure* field. They remain price-takers, most of them, because it is usually someone else (some other corporation) who controls, for example, the inputs to the field (fertilizer, pesticides, and seed stock) or the processing, branding, and marketing of crops (precious few growers can command the field all up and down the commodity chain like DiGiorgio). Most growers find themselves in the tightening grip of the cost-price squeeze we've already discussed. On top of that, they sit right on top of a land-value squeeze too. Land is capitalized not only on the expectation of uninterrupted supplies of "cheap labor," but also on the expectation of future revenues given both current productivity and expected innovation. Such expectations may run counter to the movement of prices. As Guthman puts it:

> Because land values incorporate future expectations, the potential to reap more profit from a piece of land exerts upward pressure on land values in the present. Yet when prospects are dim—when, for instance, commodity prices are low—land values do not necessarily fall in proportion. So, for instance, U.S. ag-

> ricultural land values increased 75% in real terms . . . between 1947 and 1987, at the same time that commodity prices declined 60 percent. In this case, much of the difference was made up by increases in productivity, yet the nature of these improvements—increased dependence on purchased inputs—effectively shifted value to off-farm capital and thereby decreased farmers' share of agricultural output relative to land values.[2]

Add in pressure on values from other potential land-uses—like the voracious appetite for land that California's postwar suburban boom entailed—and it is clear that growers knew they were sitting on a gold mine *and* were being totally buffeted by forces over which they had little control. The result was a deepening of a rentier class of rural land owners, either as farmers got out of the direct farming business (choosing instead to lease their lands and to live off the rent) or as nonfarming interests (Teneco, the *Los Angeles Times*'s Otis family) moved into the rural land market.

A further, crucial aspect of the political economy of California farming was thus deepened: contract farming. One aspect of the contract system was rooted in the rise of the grower-shippers and powerful canning corporations. Beginning around the turn of the twentieth century, canners began contracting at the outset of the season for specific quantities of produce at prespecified prices. "Grower-processer contracts are not arm's-length deals," Richard Walker notes. "In the processing-tomato industry, for example, the processors could control the variety planted, the planting and delivery times, hauling, and other factors. They went so far, as the industry developed, to provide seeds and plants, to offer technical assistance, and to supervise farm practices." Walker goes on to detail the sort of (intra) class struggles that resulted from these arrangements (a "jockeying for position between [farmers and canners] and their collective organizations"), which have been vital in shaping the agricultural landscape (e.g., "canner contracts helped spur peach, pear, and other farmers to organize into trade associations").[3]

But a second aspect of the contract system is also vital. This is the fact that out of the dynamics of land economics and the rising importance of the canner-grower contract system arose something like a new kind of property. It defies sense to think that a crop can be divorced from the soil in which it grows, from the land without which it could not be. But that is precisely what, in the first instance, the commodification of agriculture under capitalism and, in the second place, the rise of contracting do. Time matters. In continuous production, it is always possible to sell future contracts on a commodity yet to be produced. In continuous production, though, it is not impossible, but by no

means simple to sell the actual commodity *as* it is being produced—*before* it is yet the commodity itself; *before* all that living labor power has been congealed into dead labor. In agriculture—a discontinuous process—it is not so hard. The "idle" growing time allows for crops *themselves* to be traded, as real property (not just futures) while still in the process of production. Suppose a farmer contracts with a processor for X tons of tomatoes, delivered at Y price, on Z date. With the crop divorced from the land, with it already legally and actually something quite different and separable from its milieu, the growing crop itself could be sold to a third party for Y-1, with the third party assuming the risk for the final growing process, for the costs of delivery, for, in essence, performing the contract with the processor. The property being traded is not the finished, harvested crops (x tons of tomatoes) but the crop in the ground. In California, in the twentieth century, a whole class of *buyer-harvesters* developed: contract farmers who entered the picture at the last minute, buying farmers out of their contracts (sometimes they were other, nearby farmers; other times they were independent contractors). Such a class helped farmers negotiate the dynamism—the insecurity—of capitalist farming in California. They could be "price takers" ahead of the game, not by gambling on futures but by realizing the here and now.

Such a system of entrenched and deepening contract farming required contract labor. It made no sense for growers to purchase harvest labor power, since they might not own the crop when it ripened. Nor did it necessarily make sense for buyer-harvesters to purchase it either, as their own actions were highly fluid and competitive, and their harvesting needs could shift even faster than those of particular growers. Among all the other things it does, the labor contracting system meets the needs of the new property relations implied by the rise of buyer-harvesters. In general, as Lloyd Fisher notes in his thorough anatomy of labor contracting in mid-century California, "labor contractors are specialists in the recruitment and supervision of a labor force. Producers and their foremen are not. . . . The producer is skilled in dealing with fruit and vegetables, and perhaps their marketing. The contractor is skilled in dealing with fruit and vegetable workers."[4]

Fisher goes on to note another "less tangible and more speculative but still important" advantage of labor contracting: it "provides a degree of insurance against unionization." When well organized, he suggests, the contract system "closely resembles company unionism." Yet even when not well organized, contracting protects against "organized action by workers" because of "the ambiguity of the employment relationship." Just as a grower might have little power vis-à-vis the processor (Julie Guthman describes the contract farmers

as being "like sharecroppers . . . essentially propertied laborers, hired hands on their own farms"), so might the labor contractor have little power vis-à-vis the grower: "The harvest worker is hired, transported, housed, supervised and fired by a labor contractor. All his relations are with the contractor. His grievances and complaints must be lodged there if anywhere. And yet the relief sought is almost certainly beyond the power of the contractor to grant even if he were so disposed, for the condition complained of is quite likely to have been settled in a contract with the producer which he is unable to alter without the producer's consent." Fisher notes that sometimes contractors seek to truly represent workers' interests to the growers, "but it remains with the producer" in such circumstances "to decide whether the complaint will be met with a concession or whether he will simply dismiss the contractor and hire another to complete the work." Such complex relations of authority and power—such helpful "ambiguity"—were only deepened when the contractor was the government, the subcontractor was a growers association, and the contract was, in the first instance, between two sovereign states (not the employer and employee at all). And the helpful ambiguity was only deepened further by the intervention of buyer-harvesters.[5]

With the rise of buyer-harvesters a third vital aspect of the contract system was poised to make itself felt in the dynamics of class power in the fields. This aspect is best posed as a question: suppose that a farm is struck by its workers. In response, the farmer does not lock out those workers, or seek directly to hire scabs, or otherwise break the strike, but instead sells his yet-to-be-harvested crop to a third party. Does the strike still exist? Is there still an employment relationship between the workers and the "grower"? *Whose* property is at stake? Such questions were about to take on keen significance as the AWOC entered the fray in California.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Organizing Resistance

Swinging at the Heart of the Bracero Program

We trust that nothing in this discussion will be misinterpreted as critical of the Mexican National Workers themselves. It is well known that their wages in Mexico are so low and under-employment is so prevalent that many Mexican workers have the laudable hope of bettering the condition of their families by entering into the contractual agreement that has been approved by the Mexican and United States governments. At the same time, hardships of the Mexican worker should not obscure the fact that large farm and grower interests, aided and abetted by food processors who have their hands deep in the agricultural pie, are motivated by the aim of lowering, over the long pull, their labor costs through hiring Mexican Nationals.

"Supplemental Statement in Support of HR 4575 . . . ," United Packinghouse Workers of America, January 30, 1958

Let us attack! Let us blow the whistle on every violation we find, and flood state and Federal officials with complaints. Let us systematically report, process, prosecute and check on all violations we can find of regulations affecting braceros and domestics. Let us follow all this with organized check-ups and constant pressure! Either the Federal or the state boys do their jobs and enforce the law or let them get out!! Either they fish, or cut bait!

Louis Krainock, Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, October 9, 1959

IN 1952, AS PL 78 WAS TAKING EFFECT, farm labor wages in California were 41.5 percent of industrial wages, according to an analysis conducted by the newly chartered AWOC in 1959. By that latter year, they had sunk to 28.6 percent. In metropolitan San Diego, industrial wages rose from index 100 to 152.4 over the same period. In San Diego and Riverside counties, farm wages stayed at a flat 100 (though wages in San Diego avocados did rise from 100 to 114, and miscellaneous vegetables and strawberries from 100 to 103).[1]

AWOC was born in February 1959 amid some controversy, as well as heightened expectations—or fears—that at last California farm workers were to be organized. Harry Bridges's International Longshoremans Union had been threatening to join the Teamsters in a reprise of their famous 1930s "march inland" to organize farm and packinghouse workers. Partially in response to that threat, as well as to ameliorate severe internal rivalries in the AFL-CIO (to say nothing of an apparent desire on the part of AFL-CIO president George Meany to get activists in the international labor movement "off his back"), the AFL-CIO made a significant commitment to organizing agricultural workers. The original plan was to have AWOC take the lead in organizing, but to send enrolled field workers to Galarza's NAWU and packing shed workers to UPWA. That plan quickly fell apart amid considerable internal bickering and whatever Louis Krainock's exhortations, AWOC proved fairly ineffectual in systematically reporting abuses and securing the prosecution of violations of labor law and the bracero program. Like many unions before it, however, it did prove fairly successful in latching onto wildcat wage strikes, sometimes launching its own strikes, and even, occasionally, leveraging those strikes into organizational gains. It also helped lay the foundation for the United Farm Workers (UFW) that was eventually to follow it.[2]

AWOC was well funded (more than one million dollars in direct aid was provided by the AFL-CIO over six years), but it was also dedicated to straight-up business unionism, not creating a social movement. It is interesting, therefore, that its first sustained contacts in California were with Father Thomas McCullough's Agricultural Workers Association (AWA) based in Stockton. Beginning in 1958, McCullough worked with local farm families—most of them ethnically Mexican—as well as with the newly arrived CSO activist Fred Ross to build a grassroots movement that focused on community development (within a year it had established a credit union and a cooperative grocery), English-language classes, and health. AWA also sought to publicize the effect bracero domination was having on local "home guard" workers, pioneering a "reverse strike," for instance, in which hundreds of unemployed local farm workers banded together and went to work—unpaid—clearing weeds from the

edges of highways at the height of the harvest in order to publicize the scale of displacement and hardship.[3]

For various reasons internal to the Church, Father McCullough and his close associate, Father Donald McDonnell, were barred from direct labor organizing. When Norman Smith, an experienced organizer with the United Auto Workers and then a foreman at Kaiser Steel in Fontana, was appointed director of AWOC, he made a point of meeting with McCullough (as well as Ernesto Galarza) to plot strategy, quickly settling on Stockton as the base of AWOC's operations. Assuming that labor organization—together with the relatively deep pockets of the AFL-CIO—was vital for domestic workers in the Central Valley, and worried about duplication of effort, McCullough oversaw the dissolution of AWA in June 1959 and its absorption by AWOC (though not, apparently, without significant misgivings).[4]

Both Galarza and McCullough urged Smith to concentrate his organizing on the relatively stable "home guard" of farm workers who lived in fringe settlements in unincorporated districts at the edge of the cities and towns of the Valley; they also urged on Smith the adoption of the AWA-CSO model of grassroots organizing, which placed labor issues such as pay and conditions in the field within the context of workers' total lives. Smith and AWOC ignored both sets of advice, preferring instead to focus organizing around the early morning "shapeups" in the skid row of Stockton, as well as seeking at first to focus only, and strongly, on the issue of pay (and the related issue of bracero domination). Many of those to be found at the shapeup were white and English speaking (Smith and other newly arrived organizers did not speak Spanish), but they were also, often, the remnants of an older, fading class of workers: the Okies and other Dust Bowl migrants, many of whom seasonally followed the crops even as ever-larger proportions of the labor force were ethnically Mexican and rapidly settling out of the migratory stream, basing themselves in a permanent home and commuting daily more often than seasonally. Historians of the period typically see this decision as a strategic mistake of significant proportions, and likely it was, but there was also logic to it. It wasn't skid row itself that was the target of AWOC's early organizing, but the FPS office—the lynchpin of both domestic and bracero labor deployment—located on skid row. AWOC had learned from Galarza's NAWU and others the central importance of FPS, and like the "reverse strikes" of the AWA, the focus on the shapeup was aimed not only at recruiting union members, but at shining a light on the essential irrationality of the state system of labor procurement and deployment.*[5]

* At the southern end of the state, activists were also trying to shine light on the FPS, in particular protesting the movement of the office in Brawley to the wealthier Westside, which they

If AWOC and its AFL-CIO backers were happy to accept some of NAWU's ideas and experience (indeed, Galarza served for a brief time as AWOC's director of training), they were equally happy to see NAWU sent off the stage of California agricultural history. Galarza was not well liked by many in the labor movement and H. L. Mitchell had also fallen from favor. NAWU was publicly blamed by the Federation for its "failures" to successfully organize California workers. Unsurprisingly, Galarza saw things differently. Pointing to his several successes (including his ability as recently as 1958 to organize five locals in the state with the aid of a temporary grant from the Industrial Union Department [IUD] but with no other staff than himself), Galarza outlined "the story of these last ten years" and what he saw as the true reasons for the failures of NFLU/NAWU in a long letter to Victor Reuther:

> The reasons which have to do with the relations of the NAWU to the labor movement are by no means the whole of the story. But limiting myself, in summary, to those reasons, I believe that we failed, in this regard because we never had the genuine support of the state federation; because we were denied the economic support of the national labor movement; because we always had a low priority on the political totem pole of the AFL-CIO in Washington; because the U.S. Section of the Joint Committee with the Mexican labor unions would never interest itself in our organizational problems arising out of the *bracero* program, and indeed at times issued statements and took positions that cut the ground from under our feet; because we never had the staff necessary to gain and keep the active interest of the national staff and central bodies; because in Sacramento we were kept in the position of minor wards of the state federation, concerning whom policies could be determined and commitments made without even telling the NAWU; and because in every major clutch we had to reckon with the persistent roadblocks thrown in our way by staff members and field organizers of UPWA, who nursed a frail jurisdictional hope of eventually seducing us, taking us over, or destroying us.

Galarza argued that any labor union faced with these constraints internal to the movement was bound to fail. He pointed to UPWA's similar ongoing failure to establish a permanent organization in the fields, while also noting that union's considerable advantages (support of a strong international union and a base in the sheds), while also complaining of the degree to which, through UPWA

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saw as a move both to enrich shop owners there and to make it that much harder for domestic workers to secure work (since they now had to add a couple-mile walk to their daily search for work). Miranda to Brown, July 9, 1959, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 5.

practices, "field workers have been sacrificed to the advantage of the better organized shed and processing workers."[6]

Galarza's letter to Reuther was written a little less than a year after AWOC entered California. By then, the plan for AWOC to shift workers to both NAWU and UPWA had been abandoned. NAWU was little more than a shell (albeit one with the jurisdictional right to organize field workers); in California it was no more than Galarza. Victor and Walter Reuther had made continued IUD support for NAWU contingent upon its merger with UPWA, and it was NAWU's refusal to do so that set the stage for its eventual demise. The demise was long and protracted, and wrapped up, as we will see, with a revival of the dispute over the anti-DiGiorgio film, *Poverty in the Valley of Plenty*, which had dogged the NFLU at the end of the 1940s. Its denouement was an attempted purge of Mitchell and Galarza followed instead by a shotgun marriage of NAWU with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen (AMC), a union with which Mitchell had long dallied. The merger came at a steep cost: AMC relinquished all claims to organizing field workers in California (though not without a fight), and left the state to AWOC.[7]

Despite his signature (made as secretary of the union) merging NAWU with AMC, Galarza maintained that representing field and processing workers in a single union was "a central mistake" because the "striking fact about farm workers is that they are the only ones not shackled by Taft-Hartley or Landrum-Griffin,"* creating "tactical and strategic advantages" for the organization of field workers (such as the use of secondary boycotts) that would be at best difficult to deploy if field workers were organized in the same unit as workers covered by those laws. Another tactical error, according to Galarza, was AWOC not pursuing the advantages gained when NAWU pressure finally led to the exposure of corruption in FPS and Edward Hayes's eventual departure from it. "I am convinced," Galarza wrote Victor Reuther,

> that the crucial question at this date [February 1960] is not whether two ineffective unions [NAWU and UPWA] should be merged, but whether the foreign labor program under Public Law 78 is attacked with every resource which is now available. The growers associations know better than the AFL-CIO that this is the crux

* The Taft-Hartley Act is well known; Landrum-Griffin sought to regulate the internal affairs of unions to assure more "democratic" operation, financial accountability, and an end to corruption and racketeering. Among other things, it barred Communist Party members from union office. But Galarza was likely referring to its provisions that tightened Taft-Hartley's ban on secondary boycotts and hot cargo agreements, and its restrictions on recognitional picketing.

> of the battle in 1960. The bitterness with which they defend their single and exclusive control of the *bracero* program clearly reveals their accurate understanding. And the fate of PL 78 is being decided now in Sacramento and principally in Congress. I say emphatically that unless labor again seizes the initiative on all levels of strategy—and I mean all—the Mexican program will be continued beyond June 1961 [when PL 78 was next due to expire]. Those, like you, who know the effectiveness with which Mexican Nationals have been used to smash organization, can easily project the effects of such continuation. . . . In my judgement [sic], it does not matter that organized labor is committed to give substantial sums for organization in California during the next two or three years if labor does not move on all levels between now and June 1960 to come to close quarters with the corporation farm interests in the matter of PL 78.

Such a concerted attack on the bracero program was not forthcoming; AWOC's attack on it was rather more piecemeal. Nor was Galarza's and others' advice about how best to organize farm workers followed. Little in what Galarza called the "objective conditions" in California changed. And yet, AWOC did have some significant effects.[8]

According to H. L. Mitchell, the main effect was to "re-organize the organized"—the workers already organized in the Stockton area by NAWU—though at significantly increased cost. Yet in 1960, there were 92 recorded labor disputes in agricultural California involving some 3,588 workers, and AWOC had a hand in most of them. Focusing on the shapeup, Norman Smith orchestrated what Mitchell called "a hit and run type campaign with strikes for higher wages . . . conducted in every crop in the Central Valley." According to Mitchell, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* had discovered that Smith's goal was not in securing contracts, "only in demonstrating that the AFL-CIO could win wage increases for farm workers." This was a strategy not at all different from that pursued by NAWU in the wake of the DiGiorgio strike a decade earlier. But now, Galarza argued, these tactics were drawing small farmers again into a close alliance with the big growers, and "as usual" small farmers were "fronting the indignation movement against the AWOC," and (perhaps with a trace of hyperbole) "there has probably not been such a solidification of interests among farm employers since the criminal syndicalism agitation of the 1920s." He also noted that the combined work of AWOC-UPWA was meeting with "strong aversion . . . among fieldworkers, especially Spanish speaking," and prophesied, somewhat accurately as it turned out, that "the reactions among Spanish speaking workers may be as crucial as that of the Filipino workers after they were betrayed in the 1936 lettuce strike"—only this time, with the eventual creation of the United

Farm Workers Organizing Committee (the forerunner of the UFW), the crucial change would be more positive.[9]

But that was still a few years down the road. In the meantime, AWOC launched a campaign of what Galarza called "hot box" strikes in the vegetable and fruit districts.

The "Hot Box"

Of the 92 recorded farm labor disputes in 1960, the Department of Employment certified around 85 as bona fide under the Wagner-Peyser Act.* On average, each dispute involved about 40 workers. As a report of the California Senate pointed out, that was a far cry from the average 850 workers per dispute in the 1930s. But neither were these meant to be mass strikes; rather, they were strategically targeted. The first strike of the 1960 season set the template. In an effort coordinated with AWOC, UPWA targeted the mixed vegetable farm of Lester Katsuda near Oxnard, where the celery and lettuce harvests were beginning. Though a long way from its center of operations in Stockton, the strike made sense as an early—if behind the scenes—intervention for AWOC, because it exposed the ongoing domination of field, and increasingly packinghouse, work by imported workers.† Katsuda's crew was not large—27 workers. But it was a mixed one, composed of 6 braceros, 14 Japanese workers imported under PL 414, and only 7 domestic workers. Since 1956, PL 414 had allowed California growers to import Japanese (and a very small number of Filipino) workers for up to three years. In December 1960, there were 1,730 imported Japanese (and no imported Filipino) workers in California, of which 78 percent were in the south coast area.[10]

Typically, celery workers cut the crop in the morning and packed it in sheds in the afternoon, no matter the more or less general prohibition on imported

* The number of bona fide disputes is hedged because the way the data are reported makes it impossible to determine the actual number of bona fide disputes per year. All that is reported is that over a nearly three-year period, 92.4 percent of the disputes were certified as bona fide. California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 2: 62.

† A brief account of the strike is given in Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Committee," 100–101. Thompson makes out that this was a strike only in the celery harvest; in fact, it was the *farm* that was struck. Katsuda grew lettuce and cabbage in addition to celery and the arrests in this strike centered on the lettuce, not the celery harvest as Thompson implies. Thompson also describes this strike as an AWOC effort. While it is apparent that AWOC was involved, contemporaneous reporting makes it clear that the strike was very much led by, and was centered on the demands of, UPWA. Despite these small problems Thompson's thesis remains an excellent—and probably the most complete—account of AWOC's rise and fall in California.

workers doing shed work. Adopting a strategy from NAWU, the two unions sent crews of domestic workers to Katsuda's gate requesting work. When Katsuda refused employment to some of the domestic workers, UPWA called a strike on April 4. The main demands were for union recognition and for increased wages from 85¢ to $1.10 per hour for field work and from $1.05 to $1.30 per hour for packinghouse work. They also wanted imported workers out. For his part, Katsuda said through his attorney that he was paying wages "in accordance with statewide scales" and that Japanese and Mexican workers were only supplemental to his domestic workforce—though the manager of his labor association later claimed that both the Mexican braceros and the Japanese workers were Katsuda's "regular employees." The braceros were quickly ordered out of the fields in accordance with the USDL's newfound interest in enforcing PL 78. The Japanese nationals stayed in their positions, however, with the INS finding no authority to remove them under PL 414 (despite an agreement that it would follow USDL policy on strikes). Following protests at the Los Angeles INS office and at the Department of Employment office in Oxnard, and in the wake of a sharp phone call from Secretary of Labor James Mitchell to INS Commissioner Swing, the Southwest division of the INS decided on April 20 (sixteen days after the strike began) to remove the Japanese workers from the farm.[11]

As with the delay in removing braceros during the DiGiorgio strike in 1949, the INS's delay in removing imported Japanese workers in this strike had its effect. It allowed some celery and lettuce to continue to be picked, even if in the former crop Katsuda was forced to plow under between fifteen and twenty-five acres (depending on report), and the latter, worker resistance included not just picketing, but invading the field and (apparently) dumping packed boxes and destroying their contents, leading to thirteen arrests.* More important, though, it allowed time for Katsuda to negotiate the sale of his crops to Oxnard Harvesting Company owned by Maynard Bradshaw. Bradshaw quickly recruited a cadre of strikebreakers from El Paso, who were set to work on the struck farm. Bradshaw argued that there was no labor dispute against *him*: "These guys do not have any business striking against me. . . . They never worked for me. Their beef is with Lester Katsuda, and he's not even in this anymore." Katsuda's and Bradshaw's victory was not complete. As workers in the strikebreaking crew

* It is noteworthy that the names of the arrested are Hispanic, calling into question both Galarza's statements above and the general sense among historians that UPWA and AWOC focused too much on white, former Dust Bowl workers. In this instance at least, the workers being defended, and much of the leadership, were ethnically Mexican and Filipino. Some of the arrested, and many of those pictured in other articles picketing, were women.

learned of the strike, they refused to return to the field,* and at least some of the crop had to be picked by a volunteer crew of farmers (organized in part by the head of the Ventura County Farm Labor Association, himself until recently an official in the scandal-ridden FPS). Though the UPWA would not be as heavily involved in the wave of strikes that was about to break upon the California valleys, this Oxnard strike set the pattern for what was to follow, in terms of both union tactics and grower response.[12]

In the wake of the Oxnard strike, AWOC doubled down on its practice of inserting union organizers into crews recruited at shapeups, especially in Stockton. The goal was to work the buses on the way to the field or orchard and convince workers to refuse to work once they arrived, unless pay was increased. The first big effort targeted the large Podesta cherry orchard in Linden, San Joaquin County. On May 20, a busload of 25 workers arrived at the orchard but refused to work unless they received $1.10 per bucket, which was 20¢ above what Podesta was paying, but which AWOC claimed was the going rate. The Podesta manager later claimed he offered $1.10, though AWOC denied that had been the case. At the request of the union, the Department of Employment certified a bona fide strike was under way and refused to refer further domestic workers or any braceros to the orchard.[13]

Fred Podesta, the owner, objected, arguing he had never actually employed the striking workers (not only were they employed through a contractor, they had yet to start work), and thus they could have no complaint against him: there was no "employment relationship," which he claimed was a prerequisite for a bona fide labor dispute. Labor Secretary Mitchell eventually upheld the Department of Employment's interpretation that recruited or referred workers could indeed strike, even if there was not yet an employment relationship. In the meantime, Podesta appealed to Governor Brown to allow him to recruit braceros, but Brown refused, noting that federal law disallowed the use of Mexican Nationals where there was a bona fide labor dispute. Despite recruiting a volunteer labor force of nearly 1,000 (who apparently did much damage to the trees, while picking barely as many cherries as a "skilled" crew of 150 could), Podesta Farms claimed it lost $225,000 over the course of the strike. Indeed,

* Their contractor was eventually charged with breaking a labor law requirement that workers be informed when they were deployed to a struck workplace. That he would be so charged (much less convicted) was not a certainty: it was not clear yet whether Bradshaw's claim that there was, after the crop sale, "no beef" would carry the day. I have not located any evidence concerning whether the charge against the contractor was ever pursued, or if it was, what the outcome was.

though limited by court order to 2 pickets only at the entrance to the orchard, AWOC's picket line was effective enough to apparently force Podesta to pay as much as $2.40 a bucket to skilled workers willing to cross the line. (As was often the case, the Teamsters had no compunction about crossing the line to collect picked cherries and haul them to their unionized cannery.)[14]

If the California Department of Employment quickly refused to refer domestic workers to Podesta, or to certify the need for braceros, it was hardly consistent in its actions over the course of the summer. As the wave of strikes, which spread through cherries, into the peach and apricot harvests, and on to the early pears, reached two DiGiorgio orchards near Marysville, keenly contradictory interpretations of the rules governing both domestic worker placement and the certification of braceros emerged. When a union letter hand-delivered to DiGiorgio's Dantoni orchard at 6:00 a.m. on July 14 demanding a wage increase, job security, and a grievance procedure went unanswered, AWOC established a picket line at 11:00 a.m.; 132 of the 186 working pear pickers immediately walked off the job. Workers at DiGiorgio's New England orchard joined the strike four days later. The Department of Employment announced that if it certified a bona fide strike, it would cease referrals of domestic workers. Before it could act, however, a Yuba County Superior Court judge granted DiGiorgio a court order requiring Employment to refer both domestic and bracero workers, provided that both vacancies were available and referred workers were informed there was a strike in progress. The judge argued, both in the preliminary order and later following a hearing, that the secretary of labor exceeded his authority when he required state employment offices to halt referrals when a strike was certified. He also ruled that the section of labor law granting the labor secretary this authority was invalid (he was overruled much later). In the wake of the ruling, the Department of Employment agreed to begin referring domestic workers, but deferred to the secretary of labor on a decision as to whether it should certify braceros. With the assistance of Employment, DiGiorgio was soon able to recruit five hundred workers to cross the picket lines at both orchards, according to Vice President Bruce Sanborn. (This recruiting was not uncontested. AWOC stepped up its picketing of the Stockton FPS office, leading to many buses leaving unfilled. More than half the workers referred by FPS to DiGiorgio refused to cross the picket line.)[15]

In the wake of this ruling, and with its success in recruiting strikebreakers, DiGiorgio immediately appealed to the USDL to *not* rule on whether braceros could be referred: it apparently feared a precedent-setting ruling from the secretary of labor. Attorneys for DiGiorgio argued that with recruitment of domestic workers under the court order, more pickers were now at work in the Dantoni

orchard than before the strike began, meaning that now "there was . . . no job which is 'vacant' because the occupant was out on strike . . . ; all such vacancies had been filled." If the labor secretary were to agree to this position, then a pending DiGiorgio suit demanding bracero certification would be "render[ed] moot . . . (thereby avoiding the necessity of testing the Regulation)" requiring workers not be referred to struck ranches. The attorney also recommended to the USDL that "it would also be helpful in dealing with certain stratagems which have been attempted in the past and undoubtedly will be attempted in the future if the Secretary were to rule that a worker who accepts employment on the preconceived notion of walking out on strike is not a bona fide 'occupant' of the job within the meaning of the Regulation and the Migrant Labor Agreement, and that when he leaves his work the job does not become vacant because the 'occupant' is on strike."[16]

Despite this entreaty, Labor Secretary Mitchell ruled ten days later against certifying three hundred braceros for the two DiGiorgio ranches, claiming such certification "would be tantamount to supplying alien strikebreakers," especially since no Mexican Nationals had been used in the harvest for "at least the last two years and that a substantial number of domestic workers had refused to accept employment with DiGiorgio in the face of the strike." With this decision, AWOC decided to remove the picket line, claiming that in order to recruit strikebreakers, DiGiorgio had raised wages well above what the union was demanding, and that the ruling against bracero certification amounted to a significant victory. AWOC historian Mark Thompson concludes that while the specific effects of the strike are hard to gauge, "the strike evidently raised wages for DiGiorgio's employees, and probably other workers in the area, too."[17]

The wave of strikes moved north, setting down briefly in a series of fruit orchards around Marysville, and then heading up the Feather River to the peach harvest at the three-hundred-acre Tom Bowers orchard near Gridley. When 83 braceros continued to work after 149 domestic workers walked out, some 30 to 40 of the domestic workers charged into the orchard, knocking down ladders. When the braceros attempted to flee, they were apparently kept in the orchard by tear-gas-wielding deputies dispatched to the ranch to keep order. Two AWOC organizers, Dewitt Tannehill (an old colleague of Galarza) and Floyd Quick, were arrested and eventually convicted of trespassing; Tannehill was also convicted of inciting a riot. As a result, pickets at the Bower orchard were limited by court order to three; a judge also ordered the FPS to refer domestic workers to the ranch, citing the DiGiorgio case as precedent. However, in the wake of the violence, few were willing to cross the picket line. Not only that, but Bowers's braceros were ordered off the ranch by the BES "for their safety," a move ratified

by the Mexican government, which refused to allow any Mexican Nationals back into the orchard.[18]

This wave of strikes—which continued throughout the summer fruit harvest, and which frequently resulted in AWOC rushing pickets and organizers to the scene of spontaneous walkouts—was well covered in the papers, as were the various courtroom and bureaucratic machinations accompanying them. The turmoil in the "hot box" perhaps shone a more searing light on the nature of the farm labor recruitment and deployment system, and braceros' role in this, than did the previous several years of Galarza's agitating, whatever the mixed *union* gains of the campaign might have been. Indeed, Dick Meister and Anne Loftis, among others, argue that the strikes in the Sacramento Valley, especially the DiGiorgio strike, led to AWOC making "cutting the flow of braceros" its "principal concern"—in essence, picking up exactly where Galarza left off. To the degree this is true, it put AWOC at the center of a burgeoning anti-bracero coalition composed of labor, church, civil liberties, and other organizations, galvanized by the turmoil of the civil rights struggles—and by Edward R. Murrow's *Harvest of Shame*, which CBS aired the day after Thanksgiving, 1960—focused on assuring the nonrenewal of PL 78 when it expired in December 1961.[19]

The Trials of AWOC

This was not such a comfortable place for AWOC to be. Perhaps misjudging the strength of the coalition—and certainly misjudging the intransigence of growers (especially DiGiorgio)—AWOC had secured an old, never-destroyed print of *Poverty in the Valley of Plenty*, and showed it in union meetings up and down the Central Valley at the outset of its 1960 campaign. When DiGiorgio learned of these screenings—which Galarza avers were made in order to present "an object lesson in how not to organize a corporation farm"—it sent a private investigator (who was also a Southern California farmer and local official of the Associated Farmers) to observe the screenings and note who sponsored, spoke at, and attended them, and to verify a connection between Galarza (who long ago had been enjoined from showing the film) and AWOC (Galarza had served a short spell on the staff of AWOC when it first came to California in 1959).* In mid-May 1960, DiGiorgio filed a complaint of libel against AWOC's Norman

* The settlement of the original lawsuit concerning *Poverty* held Galarza and H. L. Mitchell blameless if a third party showed the film without their knowledge. Given Galarza's diminished role by this time in California union activities, it seems likely that the only reason DiGiorgio sought to find a connection between Galarza and the 1960 showings was to pay back old grudges.

Smith, H. L. Mitchell, Galarza, NAWU, and AWOC, claiming in part that Mitchell and Galarza had violated the 1950 agreement against future screenings of the film. It simultaneously unleashed a public relations blitz, aimed specifically at using the showing of the banned film to discredit AWOC as it commenced its season in the "hot box," drawing especially on Congressman Tom Werdel's *Congressional Record* "Extension of Remarks" (see chapter 4) to press home its libelous nature. Among other things, depositions in the case took AWOC organizers like Smith, Louis Krainock, and Dewitt Tannehill out of the Central Valley for days at a time during the height of the summer campaign.[20]

Perhaps realizing the flimsiness of its case against Galarza and Mitchell (the former had quit AWOC in January 1960, well before the first showing of *Poverty*, and neither he nor Mitchell knew of the showings in advance), or perhaps admitting its real aims (hobbling AWOC),* DiGiorgio withdrew its libel suit in late summer and substituted for it a new one that no longer named Galarza and Mitchell, only AWOC, UPWA, and their officers. Even NAWU was no longer named. Now, though, it also added the AFL-CIO (it is likely that the print of *Poverty* had been provided from UAW files in Detroit). It would not be until November 1961 that the case would come to trial. The Stockton judge, a friend of growers, speedily found for the plaintiffs, assessing the unions for damages totaling $150,000 in February 1962, an amount lowered to $60,000 on appeal. As important, according to Galarza, was that through depositions and the trial, DiGiorgio (and presumably other growers) "was left in possession of the field in a labor dispute . . . [and] of valuable information about the AWOC and its operations."[21]

Growers predicted at the outset of the trial that a judgment against the union would "mean the final blow to AWOC's already tottering efforts to stay on its feet." If it was tottering, it was largely because the decision in the *Poverty* case was only one of innumerable courtroom skirmishes in which grower-friendly judges did all they could to knock the legs out from under the union. On the heels of the struggle in the Peach Bowl north of Sacramento, AWOC had alighted on the tomato harvest in the northern San Joaquin, the same district the NFLU had tried to organize in 1950. Now, ten years later, tomatoes were picked almost entirely by braceros. As part of their required efforts to recruit domestic workers, San Joaquin tomato growers sent buses to the Stockton skid row shapeup each morning of the harvest, typically returning empty. One day, though, Lind-

* DiGiorgio Vice President Bruce Sanborn Jr. specifically denied that the filing of the libel suit was "a part of a legal move to effect [sic] in any way the efforts to organize agricultural workers." Deposition of Bruce W. Sanborn Jr., November 10 and December 2, 1960, in the matter of *Ernesto Galarza v. DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation, et al.*, p. 58, Galarza Papers, Box 41, File 1.

say Cochran, a grower of 890 acres of tomatoes near Tracy, found one of his buses filled with domestic workers "wearing what appeared to be AWOC bowling team shirts," in Cochran's words. Soon after starting work the domestic workers (who had to be hired before a crew of braceros) walked off the job, demanding 20¢ a box and a guarantee of $1.25 an hour (wages in the district ranged between 12¢ and 18¢ a box, depending on picking). The Department of Employment ruled a bona fide strike was in progress, cancelled referrals of domestics to the Cochran ranch, and requested that braceros be removed.* Before this ruling could be made official, however, a local judge—the very same judge who would later rule against AWOC and its codefendants in the *Poverty* trial—restrained the department from any ruling that would require braceros to be removed and enjoined AWOC from picketing (an injunction later lifted to allow highly restricted picketing).† Braceros continued to pick tomatoes, allowing the decisive first pick to be completed and providing an opportunity for the USDL to rule the second pick was a distinct operation on the Cochran farm and thus the labor dispute no longer existed.[22]

Whatever the legal wrangling, the struggle at the Cochran and other area tomato farms seemed not only to draw into the light domination of the crop by braceros, but also to embolden at least some Mexican Nationals. In the wake of the Cochran strike, braceros on the nearby Soares ranch walked off their job, demanding increased pay and better work conditions. But this was all stage setting. The real showdown was going to come, as it often did, in the Imperial, which, given its already shaky finances, was also a do-or-die harvest for AWOC.[23]

Despite the Department of Employment agreeing with growers that, up and down the state, AWOC was loading labor buses with organizers and militants whose main purpose in taking a job was to call a strike, it also reaffirmed, just as the winter lettuce harvest was beginning in the Imperial, that in addition to the USDL requirement that before they could be certified for braceros, growers not

* The strike against Cochran was one of several simultaneous actions against tomato growers in the northern San Joaquin and Southern Sacramento valleys; curiously, even as the Department of Employment's Irving Perluss was ruling against Cochran, he also announced in the press that he would now refer domestic workers to struck farms on the proviso that they be informed a strike was in progress. "Two Tomato Farms Hit By Strikes," *Oakland Tribune*, September 20, 1960, 5; "Farm Labor Dispute Probe Wrap-Up Set," *Hayward Daily Review*, September 23, 1960, 27; "State Farm Labor Policy Reversed," *Oakland Tribune*, September 20, 1960, 5; see also "Court Lets Pickets Return to Ranch," *Oakland Tribune*, September 23, 1960, 50.

† The defendants in the *Poverty* trial had tried to get the judge to disqualify himself, because of this earlier ruling, but to no avail. Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 109–10; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 126.

only had to seek referrals from the FPS, they also had to "*undertake independent gate hiring*, and exhaust all other reasonable sources of qualified labor supply."* Once again coordinating its actions with the UPWA, and pinning all its hopes on a new Labor Department in the Kennedy administration even friendlier than had been James Mitchell's department under Eisenhower, AWOC decided to focus on the few remaining domestic workers in the Imperial Valley as well as some of the "green card" commuting workers from Mexicali, to expose once and for all the machinations of the bracero program in undermining worker rights and destroying local communities. The gate-hiring requirement would be a crucial tool in the struggle.[24]

Setting up shop in Brawley in mid-December 1960, UPWA-AWOC called its first organizing meeting on December 21, where it determined goals of union recognition, a union hiring hall, seniority rights, a minimum wage of $1.25 an hour (the prevailing wage was then 90¢), piece rates for skilled labor, mandatory rest breaks, toilets in the fields, and free transportation to and from the fields. The wider lettuce harvest employed some 12,000 workers at its peak, but by now 9,000 of those were braceros, and another 1,500 commuted daily across the border, leaving only around 1,500 local domestic workers.[25]

The unions protested and leafleted not only at the Valley shapeups and farm labor offices, but also the El Centro bracero reception center and the Calexico border station where the commuting farm workers—among them six hundred braceros—crossed into the United States each day. At a mass meeting held in "the hole" (a shapeup for undocumented workers in a ravine next to the border fence) on January 5, 1961, workers voted to hold a one-day work stoppage the following day as a show of force. More than one hundred cars (and by some accounts as many as two hundred) assembled on January 6 and motorcaded around the Valley, drawing attention to key sites—the reception center, the shapeup, the bracero camps, the rich fields—that comprised the Imperial Valley labor landscape. A week later, January 13, the unions held a sit-in at the FPS office in El Centro to protest the refusal of members of the IVFA—now directed by deposed FPS chief Edward Hayes and the largest user of braceros in the Valley—to conduct gate hires, whatever the requirements of the Department of Labor. The same day a strike was called against Bruce Church, Inc., a grower of some 1,000 acres of lettuce and a major user of braceros. The strike targeted a single 270-acre field. Of the one hundred workers deployed there by the labor contrac-

* Many growers disliked gate hiring not only because it afforded union activists a chance to gain access to fields using braceros, but also because they had grown to rely on the at least partial vetting of workers that the FPS provided.

tor, at least eighty-one put down their tools and refused to work until the union demands laid out in December were met. The UPWA's Louis Krainock and other organizers expected that with one field struck, braceros would have to be pulled off all fields owned by Church, a position the company seemed to accept, at least for the first day: braceros were removed from all Church fields. The following day, however, Church "borrowed" braceros from other IVFA farmers and set them to work cutting lettuce, presumably on the theory that these Mexican Nationals were not working directly for Church and thus were not in violation of the prohibition on using braceros in struck fields.[26]

The strike spread to the Freedman Farm on January 16, when nineteen workers laid down their tools. Over the following week eighteen more growers were struck in a coordinated effort wherein union activists would present themselves for gate hiring, only to quit work when their union brothers showed up at the edge of the fields a little later bearing pickets.* The goal was primarily to force the withdrawal of braceros. In all, as few as 367 workers out of the 12,000 workers in the Valley may have gone on strike, and the strikes may have affected fewer than 3,000 of the 9,000 braceros authorized for the Valley. But everyone, from the union organizers on the ground and the AFL-CIO in Washington, to the directors of the labor importation program there and in San Francisco and Sacramento, to the growers up and down the state, recognized the strike was going to be decisive in shaping any future bracero program.[27]

Even as the strike was spreading on January 16, Superior Court Judge Elmer Heald—who had burnished his antiunion credentials when as district attorney he oversaw a series of strategic criminal syndicalism prosecutions during the violent Imperial Valley strikes of 1934—issued a restraining order restricting picketing on the Bruce Church Ranch to three representatives at each gate. A day later, the USDL ordered all braceros off the Church farm, but not in the first instance because of the presence of a strike as such, but rather because Church had been authorized to use only 146, not the 600 then employed. At this point the question of picketing and the question of the use of braceros on struck farms became entwined. On January 26, Judge Heald modified his restraining order, banning all picketing at the Church and Freedman farms. He declared the picketing illegal because it was not aimed at publicizing the strike, but at interfering with the operation of PL 78 and thus the legal importation of Mexican workers. He argued that since PL 78 contained provisions determining the

* Growers created a blacklist to weed out what they called "habitual strikers," though it is not clear how effective this blacklist was. UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Valley Lettuce Strike," part 2: 1; see also California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 2: 70–71.

disposition of braceros during a labor dispute, any attempt to "drive them out of the fields where they were working" by picketing struck farms constituted an "illegal objective."[28]

Judge Heald based his decision on a confidential 1959 organizing memorandum written by the UPWA's Louis Krainock, which had fallen into growers' hands, and which the judge construed to imply PL 78 was the true object of the Imperial strikes, not organizing unorganized workers and making demands on farm employers. Yet only three days earlier the USDL had revised its ban on braceros being used on the Church ranch, now determining they could be used on all but the specifically struck field—the original 270 acres. Though it simultaneously ordered the State Department of Employment to speed up strike determinations—to take no more than forty-eight hours to determine if a bona fide strike existed—and though it apparently reversed course from earlier strikes and banned use of braceros in struck fields when its harvest was sold to a third party,* its resort to a field-by-field basis for making these determinations all but hobbled the unions' ability to consolidate their strikes (a hobbling made complete on January 31, when a federal judge in San Diego enjoined the departments of Employment and Labor from barring growers from using braceros, claiming there were no reasonable due process provisions in the departments' policies). Banned from picketing,† and sentenced to watch struck fields picked by scab braceros (as well as "volunteer" harvesters organized by a local "Citizens Committee to Save the Harvest"), the unions turned militant, focusing their efforts both on enlisting the support of the Mexican government in their efforts to have braceros removed from struck farms and on engaging in direct action, now not at the fields themselves but at labor offices and labor camps housing braceros.[29]

What the unions were up against was clear. Not only did the history of the 1934 strikes still echo around the Valley—strikes in which the labor historian Cletus Daniel says growers' use of violence evinced "the highest and most graphic expression of regional and class patriotism"—but already the class patriotism of the growers was taking its modern form as a large caravan of farmers gathered in Marysville, stopped in Sacramento to call on the governor, and continued on to the Imperial, gaining recruits as it went. The caravan arrived at

* There is some contention on this point. Thompson reports he was told in an interview with a BES official two years after the strike that sold crops could be harvested "freely." "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 150.

† Judge Heald's total ban on picketing was upheld on appeal by a Riverside County judge after Heald disqualified himself in the wake of complaints by union lawyers. "Picket Ban Retained in Farm Fight," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, February 11, 1961, 2.

the beginning of February, seeking to bring the strikes to their "climax" as the *Imperial Valley Press* put it.[30]

A, if not the, climax, quickly came. In the first couple of days of February, the sheriff deputized dozens of area growers and businessmen, distributing shotguns and arm bands for identification (before the strike was over, some three hundred had been deputized, nearly matching the number of active strikers). These deputizations anticipated and followed a sit-in of more than 250 union members and activists outside the gates of the Danny Dannenberg labor camp. The Dannenberg ranch was struck in late January, and on the thirty-first the Department of Employment certified the strike as valid. The Dannenberg camp, however, also served as central housing for IVFA braceros deployed to a range of area farms. The sit-in's goal was to prevent the movement of these workers out of the camp. When the sit-in prevented an undersheriff and two new deputies (armed, apparently, with "a submachine gun") from entering the camp, they radioed for support. A force of one hundred responded—the sheriff, California Highway Patrol officers, and dozens of newly sworn-in deputies, all armed. The sheriff ordered the protesters to disperse; when they refused, he arrested thirteen (mostly union officers) for unlawful assembly.[31]

Fearing for their safety, the Mexican consul quickly ordered the braceros in the Dannenberg camp evacuated to other camps in the Valley. (The consul had earlier described the San Diego judge's order preventing the removal of braceros from struck fields as evincing "all the undertones of holding Mexican citizens in peonage.") Despite the restraining order against it, the USDL now ordered the removal of braceros from all struck fields—some 1,700 workers at that moment, a number later reduced to 600—arguing that the judge had left open the possibility of removal if braceros' safety was at risk, though no workers were actually withdrawn pending appeal. Growers responded by establishing armed guards at many camps, presumably to guarantee braceros' safety. The sheriff also stepped up a campaign of arresting for vagrancy domestic workers who came to the Valley either seeking work or as union activists.[32]

Meanwhile between five hundred and one thousand growers—many deputized, most of them armed—and their allies (including the farmers who had caravanned in from around the state) met in a mass meeting, where an attorney counseled against resorting to violence. Released on bail, AWOC and UPWA officials organized another sit-in at the FPS offices in El Centro, assuring few placements of domestic workers were made. They followed this with another picket of the Dannenberg camp (where some seventy braceros remained housed). On February 9, another union caravan of fifty or so cars formed and motored through Brawley, stopping at the Joe Corona labor camp to call the braceros

staying there out on strike. When the gates were opened to admit Fred Corona, Joe's brother and the food concessionaire at the camp, a number of pickets stormed inside, sparking a riot in which a cook and two Mexican workers were injured and a small fire was started. A deputy sheriff guarding the camp "placed everyone under arrest, but the pickets ran to their cars and escaped."* In a series of later raids, including of the union hall in Brawley, as many as forty domestic workers and union officials were arrested and charged with inciting riot, assault, trespass, attempted arson, and attempted kidnap, among other charges. Bail for union leaders was set at seven thousand dollars.[33]

The Mexican Consulate continued to demand that braceros be removed from struck farms in the Valley (responding perhaps to union picketing of the Los Angeles Consulate), and on February 16 cancelled transfer into California of potential braceros from the Empalme center. After an early February meeting between Labor Undersecretary Willard Wirtz, growers, and AFL-CIO representatives in Los Angeles failed to lead to any sort of agreement over the disposition of braceros, and in defiance of the San Diego restraining order (itself under appeal), the USDL issued a series of orders between February 23 and 27 withdrawing Mexican National workers from eighteen struck farms. The growers objected and hearings on the order were held on March 2 and 3 in Los Angeles. In their wake, Labor Secretary Arthur Goldberg upheld the braceros' removal, but not on the grounds there was a labor dispute (the secretary seemed sympathetic to this line of argument but called it moot). Instead, he ordered the braceros' removal in deference to the wishes of the Mexican government that the workers be removed "pursuant to Article 7(d)(2) of the Mexican Labor Agreement, which provides that existing authorizations for the employment of such workers may be revoked: 'Where the employment of Mexican workers by the employer would present a menace to the health or safety of the Mexican workers.'"† In the wake of this decision the San Diego judge dissolved his re-

* London and Anderson (*So Shall Ye Reap*, 52) report without attribution that the invasion of the camp was a calculated move designed precisely to show that braceros were in danger and would have to be removed under Article 7(d)(2), as described below. They also claim that "union representatives, to make it appear braceros were in mortal danger, cached some dynamite, making sure authorities would find it," but I can find no corroborating evidence for this claim.

† The UPWA called this "the worst possible choice available to the Department from the viewpoint of creating an orderly framework for labor-management relations in areas where imported Mexican workers are extensively employed" because it told domestic workers their only option, if they wanted braceros removed in the midst of a strike, was to threaten or resort to violence. UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Lettuce Strike," part 1: 1.

straining order, even as Judge Heald in the Imperial expanded his antipicketing injunction to cover any place in the Valley where braceros lived or worked.[34]

By now, however, the lettuce harvest was all but over. On March 17, both unions declared an end to their strikes in the Valley, noting that the harvest was ending, but also publicly claiming they had secured a primary objective with what they saw as the precedent-setting removal of braceros.* But because braceros were allowed to continue working the fields until almost the end of the harvest, Mark Thompson, the historian of AWOC, argues that grower losses attributable to UPWA-AWOC action were likely "slight."[35]

Braceros Up for Grabs

The losses to the unions, on the other hand, were significant. The cases against the union leadership languished in court (the charges of kidnapping were eventually dropped) and not all of the jailed unionists were released until the end of August (sometimes after having been convicted and sentenced to time served). Significant legal bills were amassed. Even as some union organizers remained in jail, George Meany announced in June 1961 the withdrawal of AFL-CIO support for the AWOC effort in California, especially because the unionizing drive to date had resulted in few dues-paying members and no contracts. What it had resulted in was a round of vicious union infighting over jurisdiction, as the merged NAWU/AMC protested strongly what they claimed was a usurpation of their jurisdictional rights by UPWA-AWOC. Despite its weakened status, however, AWOC's success in getting braceros pulled from struck fields sufficiently worried Bud Antle, a large grower in the Imperial and the largest lettuce grower in the Salinas, that he negotiated a sweetheart contract with the Teamsters. The Teamsters were, by and large, supporters of the bracero program, mostly because cheap labor in the fields meant expanding opportunities for shipping and in processing plants, where the union held many contracts. For his apostasy, Antle was forced out of the Salinas Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association, but was guaranteed by contract union noninterference in his supply of braceros (at the price of slightly increased wages for the few domestic field workers he used, but with few other restrictions on the hiring and deployment of field labor).† Team-

* Drawing on comments from UPWA's Clive Knowles (one of the architects of the Imperial campaign), Majka and Majka suggest the demise of the strike was due to AFL-CIO President George Meany's connivance with the new Kennedy administration, which wanted to "get rid of that thing," which was marring the administration's early days. *Farm Workers*, 161.

† Fellow large Imperial and Salinas lettuce grower William Garin was scathing in his interpretation of Antle's action, confirming that it was a move designed to protect Antle's access to

sters gained some members and protected their interests in the packing sheds, even as more and more of the lettuce crop was being packed in the fields. Antle and the Teamsters also established a pattern that would be replicated forcefully almost a decade later at the height of the UFW's organizing drive. AWOC and UPWA were shut out of the Antle fields.[36]

AFL-CIO support for AWOC was restored in January 1962 (as will be discussed), but in the interregnum, the bracero politics and practices of farm worker organizing shifted again. Despite AWOC's early decision to foreswear the community activism the AWA had begun, its revival of farm worker organizing, and especially the struggle in the Imperial, reawakened the dormant coalition of national and local progressive organizations that had long been interested in the plight of rural workers. For perhaps the first time since the struggle over the federal labor camps, a powerful coalition—composed of the National Sharecroppers Fund (a longtime patron of NAWU), several Catholic organizations (most prominently the National Catholic Rural Life Conference), other religious organizations (e.g., the Council for Christian Social Action; the American Friends Service Committee; the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism; the National Council of Churches*), civil rights organizations (like the NAACP), and progressive organizations (such as the National Consumers League; National Advisory Council on Farm Labor†; Americans for Democratic Action)—banded together to fight for an end to the bracero program and more generally for radical improvement in the lives of farm workers. In California, Henry Anderson helped create the Citizens for Farm Labor, which eventually published his work that had been censored by the University of California and that became a powerful voice against the claims of agribusiness.[37]

Even as the Imperial lettuce strike was coming to its (anti)climax, Congress was considering renewal of PL 78, set to expire in December 1961. Agribusiness was already on the defensive. Previously PL 78 had been scheduled to expire in June 1961, and as hearings on its extension opened in March 1960, growers expected they would be able to engineer a two-year extension as they had each

braceros; Garin reserves most of his scorn, however, for "unions" in general, which have "no place" in "farming produce." Garin to Vizzard, April 4, 1962, April 2, 1963; Vizzard to Garin, May 10, 1963, both in Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8.

* The National Council had long been opposed to the bracero program, much to the vocal discontent of California growers; see, for example, "Citrus Men Blast Churches' Attack on Bracero Program," *Redlands Daily Facts*, October 12, 1961, 5.

† The IVFA's Edward Hayes did his best to red-bait the National Advisory Council on Farm Labor in the midst of the Imperial strike; see Hayes to all members of the Imperial Valley Farmers Association, February 6, 1961, Salandini Papers, Box 9, File 8.

time renewal came due in the past, even if, in the wake of the labor secretary's consultants' report (see chapter 10), it might not only take a fight, but especially an attempt (once again) to wrest the program out of the USDL and into the friendlier hands of the USDA. Once again growers sought an amendment to the program barring the secretary of labor from regulating wages and work conditions of any farm labor (including domestics) beyond what was specified in the international agreement. Though not willing to tie the hands of the Department of Labor as the growers wished, it was clear the Eisenhower administration had little interest in introducing legislation to implement the recommendations of the consultants. As a result, friends of labor, led by Representative George McGovern and Senator Eugene McCarthy, introduced their own bills incorporating much of what the consultants recommended. The McCarthy bill attracted a surprising amount of support from other senators, and it became clear that neither the growers' bid for shifting control over domestic (and international) labor more fully to Agriculture nor a simple two-year extension of the program would likely pass. A compromise was eventually reached extending PL 78 for only six months, to December 31, 1961—though it was a close-run thing: PL 78 was almost not extended at all. This was, essentially, the first defeat of agribusiness interests in the history of the program.[38]

"The year 1960 may thus be viewed as a watershed year in the history of Mexican contract labor," bracero-analyst Richard Craig concludes. "From 1960 on, the forces supporting bracero labor were put on the defensive." But if growers had proved up to this point to be adept proponents of the program, they now proved they were also adept defenders of it; water was being shed, but where and how it might collect and pool was not yet clear. Now set to expire at the end of 1961, PL 78 was up for renewal in March 1961. This time growers sought to assure no reform of the program and a four-year extension, both hard-sells given that the new Kennedy administration was more unified in its opposition to extension without modification than had been its predecessor. In hearings before the House Subcommittee on Equipment, Supplies, and Man Power (of the Committee on Agriculture), Assistant Secretary of Labor Jerry Holleman agreed the bracero program had been essential to the rapid expansion of cotton and vegetable production "in sparsely settled southwestern portions" of the country, but he argued braceros had become entrenched—a permanent rather than an emergency labor supply. He confirmed that wages in areas where braceros were heavily used had not kept pace with wages in areas where they were not. The USDL, he therefore declared, opposed a four-year extension of the program (because that would foreclose frequent review of changing conditions), and supported amendments to give domestic workers

guarantees of workman's compensation, occupational health insurance, "free transport, free housing, subsistence when work is not available, written contracts and work guarantees," in line with what braceros were formally entitled to. Labor Secretary Goldberg reiterated the USDL proposal three months later in hearings before the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Labor, but added to them proposals to ban braceros from anything other than temporary and seasonal work and from driving power equipment, and to pay them wages "at least equivalent to the Statewide or National average rate for hourly paid farm labor, whichever is the lesser."[39]

The idea of a four-year extension received little support, but the House eventually voted to extend PL 78 for two years without change (rejecting amendments that would have, for example, barred braceros from crops in surplus or phased the program out altogether over several years). Opposition to such an extension was stronger in the Senate. It eventually approved a two-year extension, but with a proviso—designed to raise domestic wages in low-wage cotton states like Arkansas and Texas—that braceros be paid at least 90 percent of the average farm wage in the state or nationally (whichever was lower). In conference, Congress decided on an extension of two years and required that braceros only be used in temporary, seasonal work, and that they be barred from driving tractors or operating power machinery (though the secretary of labor could waive this rule in cases of "hardship"). Most significant, the conference bill required growers to make "reasonable efforts" to secure domestic workers "at wages, standard hours of work, and working conditions comparable to those offered to foreign workers." The House quickly accepted the conference bill; after much wrangling so did the Senate. President John F. Kennedy signed the bill into law despite its "failure to include . . . provisions which I believe necessary to protect farm workers." Kennedy noted that "studies . . . have clearly established" that the program "is adversely affecting the ways, working conditions, and employment opportunities of our own agricultural workers, large numbers of whom are unemployed or under-employed." He signed, he claimed, because "Mexican workers will still be needed next year, in some areas, to supplement our agricultural labor force" and out of concern for the negative impact the rapid termination of the program would have on Mexico. In other words, Kennedy named exactly the same defects President Truman had identified—and assured the U.S. public would be quickly remedied—in 1951 when he first signed PL 78 into law. Little had changed. With Kennedy's signature, PL 78 was extended until December 31, 1963.[40]

Bracero scholar Kitty Calavita calls the new restrictions on braceros in this extension a "bittersweet pill" for growers. For domestic workers, however, the

amendments in the extension were deeply ironic. Formal bans against using braceros for anything other than temporary, unskilled work and against them operating machinery already existed (even if exceptions to such bans were now the rule). And, even more, the extension turned the official logic of the bracero program on its head. Though (as we have abundantly seen) the bracero program never really worked this way, from their origins in the original negotiated agreement between Mexico and the United States in 1942, the point of the specific guarantees to braceros—payment at the prevailing wage, housing of a certain standard, transportation to jobs, and so on—was to assure that braceros would be treated "on the same basis" as domestic workers, and thus would not cause an adverse effect. The extension of PL 78 now made plain what in fact had always been operating: that it was the braceros who set the standard; growers now had to make reasonable efforts to recruit domestic workers "on the same basis" as braceros, not the other way around. Adverse effect was legalized and institutionalized, whatever the intent of the law's architects. Growers may have (to some degree) lost this battle over the extension of the program, but they had long ago won the war. Nearly twenty years of braceroism had recalibrated the relations of production to a standard set by indentured labor.[41]

Even so, the forces amassing to reverse the outcome of that war were impressive. Richard Craig lists more than forty international unions, religious organizations, activist groups, and so forth taking active roles in the various congressional struggles over PL 78 between 1959 and 1960. He likewise documents the growing number of representatives and senators, many of them quite prominent, and many from farm states, who publicly opposed the program.* As important, he also documents the decline of farm-organization support, with the Grange dropping out of the pro-bracero coalition in 1961 (in part because it feared the bracero program was the means by which the Kennedy administration would involve itself in the effort to regulate domestic farm workers' conditions), leaving only the Farm Bureau Federation as a broadly representative farmers' organization. California's grower-shippers now had a powerful coalition, numerous elected officials, and a relatively unified Kennedy administration arrayed against them, even as their own national coalition of support was unraveling.[42]

The unraveling of the *national* pro-bracero coalition was in part because the bracero program was increasingly a *California* program. In 1959 (the high

* Reverend James Vizzard of the Catholic Rural Life Conference later argued that southern politicians turned against the program because PL 78 contained stronger antidiscrimination language than that being mooted for the Civil Rights Act. Vizzard to Garin, September 24, 1963, Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8.

point of importation), Texas and California together accounted for about 75 percent of the braceros employed each month. By 1962, with mechanization of cotton harvesting advancing, Texas bracero use plummeted rapidly (as it did in other cotton states), from nearly 123,000 braceros contracted in 1960 to just over 33,000 in 1962. Meanwhile, California's usage grew from 113,000 to almost 116,500 over the same period (though with a dip in the intervening year). California now accounted for 60 percent of all imported Mexican National workers. By 1964, California accounted for 69 percent of braceros employed during the peak week.* California growers now employed at peak four times as many braceros as the next highest-using state, Texas, did at its peak. Politicians around the country wondered about the political advisability of supporting an increasingly unpopular program that so disproportionally benefited only one state.[43]

And despite the AFL-CIO pulling its funding from AWOC, matters were not settling down in that state. Henry Anderson organized a cadre of AWOC and AWA veterans intent on returning to the AWA model of community organizing.† Supported by Citizens for Farm Labor and a growing army of student volunteers, farm workers and others organized several "area councils"—local community unions—which acted independently, coordinating their action through a biweekly newsletter. As with the earlier AWA efforts, organizing centered especially on bread-and-butter issues, ranging from accessing workman's compensation to stopping redevelopment that threatened their neighborhoods, and from learning English to building playgrounds and creating day care centers. Norman Smith, still putatively president of AWOC, kept some union offices open with dues funds over which he had retained control, and collaborated with the volunteers, even if he had little direct power or control over them.

* Calculated from "Termination of Bracero Law," remarks of Representative J. Cohelan, *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, table II, 27744. This represents a simple calculation of the number of Mexican Nationals employed in California during the peak harvest week, compared to all braceros employed that week. By a different calculation—the number of braceros employed in California during peak week divided by the total number of braceros employed at *each* state's peak—in 1963, California bracero usage accounted for 81.5 percent of peak usage. "The Termination of the Bracero Program: Some Effects on Farm Labor and Migrant Housing Needs," Agricultural Economic Report No. 77 (Washington: USDA, Economic Research Service, 1965), table 3, 10.

† Fathers McCullough and McDonnell played a diminished role in these new efforts. Due to their active involvement in the Imperial strike, the Church disbanded the Spanish Mission Band, their organization. Father McDonnell went to Mexico to study with Ivan Illich and eventually to Brazil to work with the poor. Father McCullough was reassigned to an inner-city Oakland parish and ordered not to speak again on farm worker issues. London and Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 97; Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, 127.

Connections to civil rights organizations and student groups were cultivated, "offer[ing] AWOC the possibility of still greater autonomy from the AFL-CIO so that its future would not be determined by decisions made at the federation's national level," in the words of one historian. The volunteer organizers managed to call eight strikes in October, all but one in the Brussels sprouts fields, and most involving Filipino workers. Demands were for increased wages and such perennial concerns as the provision of drinking water and toilets in the fields; none of the strikes seem to have been overly successful, though they did drive wages up slightly.[44]

This phase of community organizing led to two crucial events, the second of which had the unintended effect of eliminating the very autonomy from the AFL-CIO that had allowed for inroads into permanent communities of farm workers to be made. The first showed how critical the destruction of government-run camps had been for the cementing of grower power. In October 1961, AWOC volunteers gathered at the edge of a private bracero camp near Manteca wanting to pass handbills over the fence informing workers housed there of their existence and aims. They were beaten by company guards who handed them over to San Joaquin County sheriffs for arrest on charges of trespassing and disturbing the peace. Despite American Civil Liberties Union intervention—which presumably pointed to such landmark Supreme Court cases as *Marsh v. Alabama*, which upheld activists' rights to distribute literature even in company towns—courts at several levels upheld the arrests and convictions, showing once again (as Anderson put it) that "agricultural workers housed in private labor camps are property, without the right freely to receive communications or visitors from the outside world," a problem that would continue to define workers' lives and dog labor organizers throughout the 1960s.*[45]

The second event was a convention in December in Tulare County that brought together representatives of all the area councils and featured renowned socialist Norman Thomas as keynote speaker. Conferees decided to take up a collection to send four farm workers to the January AFL-CIO convention in Miami Beach to plead for restored support for AWOC. The pleas—supported by Walter Reuther (long more friendly to farm worker organizing than Meany) and a contingent of union-supporting Catholic leaders, like James Vizzard of the Catholic Rural Life Conference—struck a chord with delegates, who quickly endorsed restoring funding. Meany relented and promised "as much money as

* For later instances, see, for example, Richards to Ball, May 16, 1964, Draper Collection, Box 21, File 6, wherein Puerto Rican "guest workers" describe their life in camp as "like being in prison," since "they are not permitted to leave at night" and otherwise "have little contact with the world outside the camp."

needed." Eventually about five hundred thousand dollars was provided. Renewed support brought with it, however, an end to AWOC-linked community organizing and a return to business unionism, again focused on skid rows and the daily shapeup, this time under the direction of veteran rural California organizer Al Green. AWOC began organizing in earnest again in 1963, with some significant changes in strategy, and the mantle for community organizing was passed on to the various CSOs developing around the state.[46]

Both groups—the business unionists of AWOC and community activists of the CSO—would continue to have an uphill battle against the bracero program for, it turned out, the pill growers had to swallow was not yet all that bitter at all. In early January 1962, the USDL published its proposed interpretations of the amendments to PL 78. While its interpretation of the amendment banning braceros from operating or maintaining power machinery was fairly strict (e.g., braceros could cut lettuce and toss it into the hopper of a following machine, but they could not sit on the machine and trim and bag it), and while the interpretation of "temporary or seasonal" seemed to preclude the easy use of "specials," the interpretation of the requirement that "reasonable efforts . . . [be] made to attract domestic workers for . . . employment at wages, standard hours of work, and working conditions comparable to those offered foreign workers" was restricted in the extreme. "Because of its legislative history," the USDL declared, this amendment had to "be confined to the physical conditions under which the work is performed"—like provision of sanitary facilities—"and not to terms of employment such as housing, transportation, subsistence, insurance, and work guarantees." Twenty years earlier the very first braceros walked off their jobs because they were not being paid—were not provided the same conditions—on "the same basis" as their domestic counterparts. Now, under this interpretation, and despite a full year of organizing, strikes, and politicking against the bracero program, and despite the formation of wide-ranging coalitions concerned with the plight of farm workers, *domestic* workers found themselves explicitly barred from receiving benefits and conditions commensurate with those of braceros, the very "captive labor force . . . unnatural in our free competitive economy," as the BES's Robert Goodwin, of all people, was soon to call it, whose deployment had done so much to drive down wages and entrench the kinds of conditions for domestic workers that were constantly pushing them on the road or out from the farm labor market altogether.[47]

Prospect

Persistent Landscapes and Sculpted Futures

AS GEOGRAPHER TREVOR PAGLEN SAYS, "Geography . . . sculpts the future. The spaces we create place possibilities and constraints on that which is yet to come, because the world of the future must, quite literally, be built upon the spaces of the past. To change the future, then, means changing the material spaces of the present." Any prospect for a future must contend with the landscapes of the past and present. Between 1950 and 1959—the heyday of the bracero program—farmland in California increased by just over 800,000 acres, or about 2 percent. The number of commercial farms, however, declined 32 percent, from just over 99,000 to just under 67,000. Farm value in California increased from 200 to 245 percent of the national average, while value per acre increased from a whisker under the national average in 1950 to 232 percent of it in 1959 and farm income jumped from 206 percent of the national average to 260 percent. Average farm size in California increased almost 40 percent, to 371.6 acres. Meanwhile, the number of hired farmhands in California as recorded in the census (not an area of its greatest accuracy) declined 11 percent, due largely to the mechanization of cotton. This, in part, was the present both growers and workers had to contend with as debates sharpened over the continuance of the bracero program.[1]

The prospect for farming in the future was complex: to change the material spaces of the present is not an easy task—though it is a necessary one. The "survival of capitalism" is predicated on the continual production of new spaces as Henri Lefebvre outlined and Neil Smith theoretically nailed down: the "continual transformation of natural space—inherited absolute space—into produced relative space," in Smith's formulation, that has now been supplemented by the continual reworking of relative space—the geographical landscape—a process that "becomes increasingly bound up in the struggle of the capitalist class to ensure the survival of capitalism." Yet pushed right up against this necessity is the very fact, as we have seen, that capital is *already* fixed in space, already sunk into the landscape, now fixed in a space dependent on a ready supply of braceros, and increasingly built for them, out of which other workers have been pushed. Sculpting a capitalist future thus requires finding ways not just to

produce new spaces, but also, maybe especially, ways of assuring the landscape persists. There is just too much at stake—all that intensification of agribusiness the bare-bones census figures given above hint at—to let it go to waste, to let the crops in the ground wither and die, to let the packinghouses stand empty, to let the great monster lettuce machines sit idle with nothing to do, to let the labor camps fade like ghost towns. "The differentiation of geographical space in the last century or so," Smith writes, "is a direct result of the need, inherent in capital to immobilize capital in the landscape. It is all very well that $500 million can be whizzed around the world at the push of a button, but it must come from somewhere and be enroute to somewhere."[2]

The first place it must come from is the production process itself. "Profit has its origin in the exploitation of living labor in production," as Harvey has pressed home, but in order for that exploitation to occur, and to recur, a whole world, a whole landscape, has to be in place, and it has to be maintained for some definite period of time. The prospect (for growers) of a radically changed future—for example, the loss of braceros—is not just a prospect of more expensive labor or diminished rates of exploitation, but a prospect of a landscape made radically redundant—a death of capitalism, locally (to this grower, that canner, or some particular farming town), if not universally: a radical devaluation of fixed capital. Such will be the case, of course, unless there is an equally radical reorientation of systems of labor procurement, or of the labor process (including the technological ensemble through which labor works), or of the productive (and reproductive) landscape itself. None of these options are cost free; and none of these costs are evenly distributed. "The circulation of capital is unstable." The prospect is frightening.[3]

"Prospect" means, among other things "an extensive or commanding view of the landscape," as well as "that which is visible from a place or a point of view, a scene, a landscape." The prospect is both the view of the landscape and the landscape itself. And it is both the act of looking out on the future, and the future itself. And *to* prospect is to find the possibility of wealth in the landscape. The prospect facing many California growers was not necessarily one of continued value. For the first time, the braceros they had come to count on seemed threatened. They had won a reprieve with the extension of PL 78 through the end of 1963, but what lay in store after that date was hardly obvious. As the landscape had been consolidated—and expanded—in the decade of the bracero precisely through the holding down of wages and the ratcheting up of exploitation, precisely also through disinvestment in the landscapes of social reproduction that set the terms of this exploitation, even as growers invested heavily in new technologies such as pesticides and their aerial application, ex-

panded irrigation, and new modes of packing and marketing, the prospect for the landscape's future prosperity was anything but clear. It was not clear just *where* in the landscape new wealth might now be found, or under what conditions. Would the death of the bracero program threaten the survival of *this kind* of capitalism in the fields? The "spaces we create[d]" since Octavio Rivas Guillen disembarked his train in Stockton on September 29, 1942, were now a critical part of the agricultural landscape. What kind of future would be built on them? These were questions that faced not just growers, not just the politicians and bureaucrats who oversaw the program, and not just the unions struggling to gain a foothold in the California fields, but the workers themselves, whether imported braceros, settled-out Okies, Mexican Americans in the shacktowns around Stockton or Brawley, or the thousands of others thrown out on the road in their continual search for work. For them, what was the prospect?[4]

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Demise of the Bracero Program

Closing the Gates of Cheap Labor?

On the matter of wages and opportunities for employment . . . In the Brawley area, as you know, much of the domestic labor leaves the area because of higher wages traditionally quoted in the North which make it difficult to determine conclusively the presence or the extent of adverse effect on wages and employment.

Robert Goodwin, Director, Bureau of Economic Security, U.S. Department of Labor, June 23, 1963

Once the gate of unlimited cheap labor is closed, we can then concentrate on effecting the procedures and conditions under which domestic workers will be attracted to farm work and will meet the labor shortage we have heard so much about these past ten years.

John Henning, Undersecretary of Labor, June 27, 1963

Few consequences of the expiration of Public Law 78 will be of greater significance than the fact that farm labor in the State will be based on the family unit and not on the single male Bracero so readily housed in [a] barrack-type environment.

John Henning, March 13, 1964

ON THE ROAD, prospects for domestic workers were not very good. At the end of 1961, there were 8,145 farm labor camps in California; only 18 of these were farm labor supply centers operated by local PHAs—the old FSA camps. According to an in-depth 1961 report by the DoH, all but one of these eighteen camps had shrunk in capacity over the preceding decade; most reported turning away families seeking shelter in the previous year; all were at least partially in violation of the Labor Camp Act code; some seriously so. DoH concluded that though "designed initially to provide safe and sanitary housing for the migrant farm worker," the camps "have travelled full circle of being first a solution to a problem and, finally, a problem themselves." With hundreds of families turned away each harvest month at those centers still existing, the DoH reported that "where these families go after being rejected . . . or whether they find housing at all, is not known. It is known, however, that in the Sutter County area [the Peach Bowl], where the largest number of rejections was reported, ditchbank camping is not uncommon."[1]

A National Scandal

DoH undertook the study because the California legislature wanted to know what had become of the extensive stock of housing built by the FPC in the 1940s, given what it perceived to be a current shortage of housing for migrant families in farming regions. The irony is obvious. The FPC had never really been engaged in constructing housing for migrant *families*, and the California legislature itself had barred the state from taking over and running those federal camps that had been built for them. And the irony had a real manifestation, maybe best exemplified by the former federal camp in Brawley. At the time DoH was preparing its report to the legislature, the camp was owned by the Imperial County Housing Authority. But the Authority had long leased it to the IVFA. "Technically," DoH reported, "the center is no longer used to house any significant number of families." Edward Hayes claimed that the IVFA could not find enough families to fill what non-barracks-type housing there was available; it thus won an exemption allowing it to rent family housing to nonfarming families. "Apparently," DoH wrote (just months after the big lettuce strike), "the domestic family worker is not a significant factor in crop activity in the area. This may be partly due to the nature of the crops, but a more significant factor may be the large number of Mexican nationals who cross over the border each day to do field work. However, there was not sufficient time to study the reasons behind the labor force patterns in Imperial County and no conclusions can be reached."[2]

Workers had little trouble reaching conclusions. According to a February 1962 affidavit from two white domestic workers taken by Ben Yellen, the Brawley doctor who remained intent on exposing the inequalities of the Imperial Valley farming system even if the attention the AWOC-UPWA campaign had brought to the Valley the year before had now faded, at the start of the winter harvest there were about 600 men in the IVFA camp, of which 72 percent were braceros, another 20 percent were Japanese workers imported under PL 414, and 8 percent were "Americans" (likely all single men, and likely all white). The two deposed white workers were deeply disgruntled by what they perceived to be significant differences in how they were treated in comparison with Mexican and Japanese workers. They complained Mexican and Japanese workers were given better (and more appropriate) food and in general treated better by camp managers. All workers, however, were housed in long barracks sleeping twenty to seventy men, with dirty mattresses and blankets and where "we are eaten alive by bedbugs each night"; floors were filthy, and for fifty of more men "there are 3 toilet bowls . . . 2 have no toilet seats. They are stopped up half the time and there is no plunger to unstop them. There are two showers but one does not work." Why were they treated worse than Mexican and Japanese workers? "American farm workers are harassed and have to live under conditions which are way below the American standard of living, and therefore they quit." It is perhaps telling that when sent to inspect the Brawley camp for its report to the legislature, DoH immediately barred IVFA from housing braceros in any of the seventy-three now highly deteriorated one-room shelters that had been built when the camp was created in 1938.*[3]

Conditions were no better for workers employed by the DGA. Five white workers attested that they were housed in a dirty store, where they were "given a thin mattress and one thin blanket. They were dirty when given to us. The weather is very cold at night in the desert. Last night icicles formed. Every night we have to sleep in our clothes so that we should not freeze. There is no stove in the store. Despite sleeping in our clothes and the one blanket, we are all very cold at night so that we are all stiff in the morning." Besides complaints about the cold and dirt, they complained that the "food is mush," and that "three times a day beans are served." "We have never seen a piece of meat that we have to

* This decision had interesting aftereffects. Barred from using these shelters, the IVFA transferred them back to the Imperial Housing Authority, got DoH to concomitantly reduce the capacity of the camp, and then wrangled the city of Brawley and County of Imperial for refunds on rent and utilities paid, claiming it was charged for the larger camp. Neves to IVFA, April 19, 1965; Neves to city of Brawley, April 19, 1965; Hayes to city of Brawley, May 27, 1965, all in Yellen Papers, Box 4, File 3.

use a knife and fork" on. They complained of diarrhea. And they complained of ill treatment by the foreman: "We feel that this nagging is done so that we will be forced to quit." Others told of being sent by the FPS to a camp near Niland, where, in addition to dirty blankets and mattresses, no cups for drinking water in the barracks, and mushy food, cooks slaughtered a hog in the shower room and left its entrails on the ground at the entrance. They too argued such conditions were a "method that the camp uses to force us to quit." When Yellen reported these conditions to the county health officer, the officer reported back that upon inspection the camp was evacuated and closed; where the men living there were sent is not clear.[4]

Yellen's most effective intervention, however, came not in exposing camp conditions, but in drawing attention to how domestic workers (of all ethnicities) were constantly being pushed out in favor of braceros and "green carders" (daily commuters from Mexicali).* Among other tactics, Yellen charged, Imperial growers often insisted that all men they hired—including domestic workers with their own housing and families in the Valley—had to live in grower camps, while also refusing to provide them transportation from camp to job as they did braceros. On February 20 and 21, 1962, Yellen took two statements. One was from four Mexican American domestic workers (three women and a man), who worked for a labor contractor contracted by Joe Maggio ("The Carrot King") to work in one of his Maggio Green Tops, Inc. fields. When they returned to the same field the next workday, it was already being picked, and a foreman ordered them to another field several miles away to replace paper covers that had blown off watermelon. Braceros were already at this task too, and the workers were told to wait—along with another 140 domestic workers—which they did for an hour before all the domestic workers were told there was no work for them (of course, by this time it was too late to seek work on other farms). The second statement was from a labor contractor who had brought a crew of twenty-six to the watermelon field and was among those told to wait before being sent home.[5]

Seemingly typical complaints, this time they drew blood, if slowly. Eventually Glenn Brockway investigated the charges in these two affidavits. In June 1962, nearly four months after the charges were filed, Brockway found that Maggio had violated Article 9 of the Migrant Labor Agreement and thus was ineligible to participate in the bracero program (not for the first time, as we have seen). He found that Maggio had refused to work domestic workers—in essence, laying them off—precisely in order to employ Mexican Nationals.

* For a report of African American men losing jobs to braceros, see statement of Thomas Knighten Jr., February 26, 1962, Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19.

Maggio appealed on several grounds. The most interesting was that he could not have laid off the workers because they never worked for him: they were employees of their labor contractor. A year later, answering the appeal, Robert Goodwin at the BES office in Washington held, "if it were not for Public Law 78 and the Migrant Labor Agreement" Maggio's argument on this score "would be very appealing."* But under PL 78 and the Migrant Labor Agreement, according to Goodwin, using contractors was merely an expedient, a convenience, for growers meeting their obligation to actively recruit domestic workers; thus "when an employer reduces his labor force by discharging a labor contractor . . . he has in effect terminated his employment relationship with the employees of the contractor." Goodwin also found that Maggio's efforts to employ domestic workers in preference to his four hundred braceros were totally inadequate (Maggio claimed that he had offered to employ the workers in the contractors' crews on an "individual basis," but the record amply refuted this claim). Goodwin thus upheld the revocation of Maggio's authorization to use braceros, though he also invited him to petition for reinstatement after a three-month wait. Coming when it did—in May 1963 just before the Imperial's dormant season, and given that Maggio had been able to use braceros all throughout the year the case had been under appeal—it is doubtful that Maggio Green Tops was much inconvenienced. But nonetheless, the newfound willingness of BES to sanction growers for violations of the law and the program rules indicated just how fragile the bracero program had become. Indeed, before the month was out the House of Representatives would vote down a bill to extend the program for another two years. It looked like the bracero program had reached an end.[6]

And surely its end (this time) was aided by just this sort of revelation: Maggio was not alone in the Imperial in wantonly violating the system. Whatever the momentary effects of the exposure of deep-rooted corruption in the program when the Brown administration took office in 1959, the firing of several FPS employees and the reassignment of Edward Hayes had not brought corruption to an end. Indeed, Hayes was entangled in the most spectacular of the corruption cases. On August 5, 1962, Elizabeth Longenbohn, a temporary bookkeeper for R. T. Englund Company, a large-scale lettuce grower with operations in Salinas, the Imperial, and Yuma, Arizona, wrote and signed an affidavit detailing how, under orders of Englund management (and the Englunds themselves), she had falsified payroll records during the previous winter lettuce harvest.

* Here, in other words, we see one reason why labor contracting came to totally dominate California agriculture after the bracero program ended. For an analysis, see Martin, *Promise Unfulfilled*.

Longenbohn claimed Englund's Imperial Valley general manager had been "summoned to an 'urgent' meeting by the I.V.F.A." When he returned he told the bookkeeper the USDL was "going to attempt to establish a rate per hour." That is, they were going to examine payroll records for piece-rate work and use that to create a minimum hourly wage for future harvests; in turn, that hourly wage would influence future piece rates. At the time, a mixed crew of 95 braceros and 10 local workers was cutting and packing lettuce at a piece rate averaging around $2.20 an hour. The general manager said: "We can't let the figure be that high, or we'll be stuck with it, so we have to change the field slips [on which piece work was recorded]. Increase the hours; that'll decrease the rate per hour."* Longenbohn also claimed Constance Englund (co-owner of the company) told her that "all the bookkeepers are doing it," apparently meaning not only bookkeepers in the Englund firm but across the Imperial Valley. Longenbohn swore that Constance Englund altered records to show work performed on a nonworkday (Sunday, December 31) as having occurred on a legitimate workday (December 16) when in fact no work had been performed. The purpose here was to balance out average weekly work-hours to avoid paying subsistence benefits. Finally, Longenbohn charged that when she asked to be retained in her position when the harvest moved to Arizona, she was told her skills at managing piece-rate payrolls (which are complex) would not be necessary because (she quotes the general manager as saying) "the Braceros have a choice of $1.00 an hour or piece rate. We are going to take to Arizona only the ones who want the $1.00 an hour. They don't want to go home, so they will take the $1.00 an hour and that will end the piece rate, because what they chose [sic] here establishes our payment."[7]

Investigation by the USDL eventually implicated seven other Imperial Valley firms in doctoring the books in hopes of establishing a lower baseline hourly wage rate, though only R. T. Englund was ever named publicly. When the charges finally hit the papers in December 1962,† R. T. Englund denied all charges and claimed they were merely a "part of the Department of Labor campaign to kill the bracero program." More substantively, lawyers for Englund

* In one of the many intriguing twists in this case, Longenbohn attested that in another attempt to decrease the hourly wage, Englund hired another crew comprising only local workers, but they picked so fast and so well that if the record of their work was included the hourly wage would go up. Not only did this undermine the efforts to establish a lower hourly wage; it also undermined the argument that local workers were neither available nor as good as braceros.

† Attorneys for the USDL tried hard to forestall publicity, fearing it would interfere with its investigation. See Robertson memo, October 2, 1962, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296373.

responded to the initial investigation by the USDL by claiming the discrepancy between hours recorded on field slips and the arrival of lettuce trucks at the cooler, and those recorded in the payroll books was not due to doctoring, but to "the practice of [Englund] in utilizing the crew after the lettuce was picked in picking up leaves from furrows and placing them on the top of the lettuce bed," a chore that took "anywhere from fifteen minutes to up to three hours." For the USDL, this explanation raised new concerns as to "whether or not this alleged activity may itself constitute a violation of Article 4 of the Standard Work Contract and Article 10 of the Migrant Labor Agreement in that such activity may have been performed without any compensation being provided therefore." The USDL thus suspended investigation into the original charges until lawyers for Englund could "describe with particularity" the specific dates in which leaf picking was conducted, the amount of time it took in each instance, the number of workers assigned to the task on each occasion, whether it was only braceros who did this work or if mixed crews were engaged, and the specific passages of the authorization to use braceros issued by the Department of Employment that allowed for such work. The representative of the secretary of labor charged with investigating this case expressed doubt that such work could be included as part of the specified lettuce-harvesting labor process or could be included as part of the piece rate for that work. Lawyers for Englund answered these latest charges on January 15, 1963, and the investigation into the company's myriad violations was resumed.[8]

Together with the Mexican consul, the Department of Labor found little creditable in the responses submitted by Englund to the various charges. A Joint Determination found the company guilty of chiseling braceros out of owed subsistence pay for when their worked hours fell below the mandated minimum; it found it deliberately falsified payroll records; and it found it could provide no "particular" evidence that braceros were assigned to leaf-pick and that this accounted for the discrepancy between field (and cooler) records and payroll records. Indeed, the Joint Determination found "Mr. Englund's own records show that when leaf picking activity was performed, it was paid separately. This fact, contrary to Mr. Englund's contention, tends to show that leaf picking was not performed as a general post-harvest practice," and that Englund's explanation for why it was not *always* paid separately was unconvincing, and indeed contradicted by the field-slip records, which showed that when braceros were allegedly assigned to leaf-pick as part of their piece work, other workers were paid an hourly wage the following day to leaf-pick the same, presumably already clear, field. Other records seemed to indicate that braceros were "working in two places at the same time and performing two activities simultaneously." Even

leaving aside this kind of blatant falsification of records, the Joint Determination found that Englund's practice of sometimes paying workers hourly wages to leaf-pick and sometimes including the work as part of their piece rate meant "the R. T. Englund Company arbitrarily decided when to pay or when not to pay their employees on an hourly basis for picking up lettuce leaves," and that such arbitrariness meant "one would have to accept that any worker who commenced harvesting a field of lettuce on a piece rate would not know whether he would have to pick up the leaves after the harvest and be compensated on an hourly basis, or whether such picking up of leaves would be included in the . . . piece rate." Moreover, the USDL found leaf picking to be a "separate activity" from the "lettuce, cut, trim, pack, spread cartons, spray, pad, close, carry and windrow" or the "lettuce, load, stack" activities for which IVFA and R. T. Englund had been authorized to use braceros. The Joint Determination thus found IVFA and R. T. Englund guilty of three specific violations: failure to maintain accurate records of the hours of employment of braceros; underpaying subsistence; and assigning braceros to work for which they were not authorized.[9]

After appeal by IVFA and R. T. Englund, the Mexican consul and the USDL issued a Final Joint Determination, finding the company had violated requirements to keep accurate records of hours worked and to pay required subsistence. It did not find Englund had engaged in deliberate fraud, but only because "decisions relating to fraud, falsification and manipulation are outside [the Final Joint Determination] purview." It also did not find R. T. Englund had used braceros for unauthorized work, but only because of the claim that braceros were assigned leaf picking as part of the piece rate was never more than a ruse—braceros had in fact never been improperly used for this work; Englund only claimed they had. Like Maggio Green Tops shortly before it, R. T. Englund Company (and its individual owners) was barred from using braceros, though in this case there was no indication the Englunds could apply to be reinstated at a later date.[10]

In the midst of the investigations into Englund's and other Imperial Valley farmers' employment and record-keeping practices—which were covered in the national press in part because of the work of the Emergency Committee to Aid Farmworkers (which had originally brought Longenbohn's charges to the attention of the USDL)—the House of Representatives opened hearings on the extension of PL 78. At the hearings, John G. Simmons of the Emergency Committee reiterated the charge against Englund and sought to introduce the Joint Determination into the record. Over the protest of several subcommittee members, his request was barred by the hearing chair (and primary sponsor of the bill to extend the program), Arkansas Democrat E. C. Gathings, who

also tried to cut off the testimony of Emergency Committee member Elizabeth Peake (friend of Longenbohn and wife of UPWA's Clive Knowles), an attempt stymied, interestingly enough, by Representative C. M. Teague (son of early bracero advocate C. C. Teague), who thought opponents of the program should be given a fair hearing.[11]

Also testifying against the extension of the program was the National Catholic Rural Life Conference's Reverend James Vizzard. He argued, "The labor blight which has affected American agriculture since the thirties is, in my opinion, a direct result of the casual relationship employers have adopted toward their employees. This condition has been fostered by Government programs such as P.L. 78 which, in effect, have provided a labor subsidy to agricultural growers, making it unnecessary for them to face and solve their own labor problems. . . . This has caused a blight on the American rural landscape—a blight characterized by poverty stricken, poorly educated, under-employed men, women and children roaming throughout the Nation in search of work." Vizzard pointed out that now even the Grange opposed the extension of the bracero program because it had become merely a "crutch . . . an excuse for failure to take positive steps that would make the program unnecessary" (in the words of American Grange official Fred Bailey). He quoted remarks of the master of the California Grange, J. Blaine Quinn, at its recent convention: "The threat to orderly production and harvesting of California's three billion dollar agricultural output must not be ignored. We take the position that the present labor strife is an indirect result of greed on the part of large landholders who brazen their way with unlimited expansion of all farm products, with little heed to supply and demand. Naturally, they depress the market for all similar products and force the independent producer to seek the cheapest labor supply available in order to get enough out of their year's efforts to keep above board." Vizzard argued that "it is highly doubtful" the large landholders could "brazen their way" without unlimited access to braceros. Imagine, he concluded, "if the City of Washington attempted to recruit garbage collectors at the rate of pay offered for many farm jobs—without such fringe benefits as unemployment compensation, paid vacations, workmen's compensation, health insurance, etc.—it would have a difficult time finding reliable applicants. The City might even have to recruit from some foreign country where reliable workers are accustomed to working for $1 a day or less."[12]

The investigation into corrupt practices, testimony like Vizzard's, and a concerted letter-writing campaign against extension had their effect. Just before its 1963 Memorial Day break, the House of Representatives voted 174 to 158 to let PL 78 expire on December 31, 1963, despite a request from the Kennedy ad-

ministration that the law be extended for one more year with some significant increases in the labor secretary's power to regulate "adverse effect," and despite a strong grower push to extend the program for two years with a significant hobbling of the secretary's power. California Congressman Ed Roybal (a CSO veteran) explained the thinking of many who opposed renewal: "I simply cannot understand the reason for importing cheap foreign labor to offer unfair competition to our domestic farm workers—at a time when over 5 million fellow Americans are without jobs. . . . In addition, the deplorable living conditions, inadequate housing, notoriously poor health facilities, and often nonexistent educational opportunities of those American citizens who migrate to work on the farms of our country, constitute a national scandal and a serious indictment of this affluent society of ours."[13]

A Serious Indictment

Even as the bracero program seemed to be at an end, conditions for domestic farm workers continued to decline.* In Sutter and Yuba counties, according to an application for a large rural health outreach grant submitted to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the migrant population was composed of some 13,500 persons; the old Yuba City FSA camp, now operated by the Richland Housing Authority, housed 1,600 of these migratory workers in 1961. They mostly "lived in 12 x 20 tin shelters without individual running water or toilet facilities." In 1962, "many of the tin shelters were torn down and by summer, the migrant population at Richland Housing had diminished," putting even greater pressure on the 281 private camps that served 10,700 single men

* Conditions for braceros could sometimes be quite good. As a result of his ongoing correspondence with William Garin, Father Vizzard was invited to visit the Garin Company ranches near Salinas; paid for by Garin, the trip also included a visit to the massive, mixed-crop Frank Coit Ranch in Mendota, near Fresno. Vizzard reported he "saw housing, feeding, and sanitary facilities for the braceros that were better than I thought. I wish it was possible to say the same for other parts of the country, and, for that matter, for the housing available to domestic workers." Vizzard to Garin, September 10, 1963, Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8; he repeated these points in Vizzard to Representative Hagen, October 21, 1963, Vizzard Papers, Box 31, File 7. An extensive report on facilities and conditions in the Coit Ranch that makes similar claims as Vizzard about the comparatively better conditions for braceros is available in "Report of an Interview with Mr. Lee Parker, Assistant General Manager, and Mr. Barton Dale, Personnel Manager, at the Frank Coit Ranch, June 5, 1959," in William C. Beatty, Patricia Pickford, and Thomas Brigham, "A Preliminary Report on a Study of Farm Laborers in Fresno County, from January 1, 1959, to July 1, 1959," prepared for the Fresno County Rural Health and Education Committee, Division of Housing Records, File 67.

and the 85 family camps that served about 1,000 (where the other 2,000 workers slept was anyone's guess). In nearby Yolo County, existing private camps were being systematically dismantled, both as domestic migrants "settled out" and as growers off-loaded responsibility for housing onto labor contractors.[14]

For those who continued to live in camps, there was little chance labor camp inspections would produce desired improvements in conditions. In Santa Clara County, for example, health officials noted that "inspection of domestic farm camps occurs only after occupancy, usually only once in the season"; environmental health hazards, they argued, were concomitantly large. In Solano County, heath officials asserted a need to (once again) hold conferences with growers "so that minimal sanitation code requirements can be interpreted to them, and an educational approach stressed in attempting to get cooperation towards improvement of defects that have been documented. Specific aid in the form of pamphlets outlining modern and effective water supply, garbage disposal, waste disposal, etc., will be offered to growers and full assistance of the Department lent in engaging their cooperation toward the end of correcting deficiencies. Enforcement will be used as a last resort in the event that defects are not corrected." In other words, these counties sought to try the same old strategy for improvement of migrant worker conditions that had been tried—always with only minimal and usually quite temporary success—at least since 1913, when worker riots forced the passing of the Labor Camp Act. As in the wake of the 1949 child deaths from malnutrition that led to the large-scale evaluation of migrant labor conditions in the San Joaquin Valley, health officials assumed the problem of bad conditions, poor health, and other ills of migratory life were a function of poor education—for both growers and workers—and not part of the structurally violent practices of farming in California (as that state's own studies had repeatedly shown it was), farming that was now poised to change once again as the steady supply of braceros dried up.[15]

For their part, growers were actively anticipating—even planning for—this change. The large grower William Garin (whose company had acreage in Salinas, the San Joaquin Delta, the Imperial, and Arizona) chastised Reverend Vizzard and other opponents of the program for not realizing braceros were essential to western agriculture, and with the House voting down the program "we are going to have to prove to you, that you are wrong, with our money. . . . We still will be producing melon and vegetable crops, but on a considerable lessor [sic] acreage, since who would be foolish enough to grow a crop which cannot be harvested." Vizzard responded that he had "enough confidence in [Garin's] ability and ingenuity to feel sure that you and your fellow growers will adapt to this change as successfully as you have other unsettling developments

in the past. If adaption requires cutting down on acreage, or diversification of crops to spread the work period, or new efforts to develop a stable more or less local labor force, I am sure you will be able to do it." Garin replied that he expected the "adaption" to be drastic:

> I am not sure that I told you when you were out here [investigating farm conditions] but we, as The Garin Company, employ 207 full time employees year round, supported by supplemental seasonal help that consists of a force sometimes in excess of 1000 people. These supplemental harvesting hands make it possible for us to employ the 207 full time people throughout the year. We also have over 100 cars, pickups, trucks, tractors and various implements of farming that go into motion every morning in preparing the crops and the land for these harvesting wants. We undertake these tasks, accept the risks and vicissitudes of farming problems, weather and human failings in hopes to stay in business making a profit, without government aid or support. Your comments that "adaption requires cutting of acreage will have to take place" undoubtedly is true and perhaps you are not aware of all the other people that will be displaced when we proceed with this action which is in line with your thinking. I am talking here of the carton suppliers who will go on one instead of two shifts—Trucks and railroads who will be hauling 50% less tonnage; or the grocery store who will need 50% less green grocery clerks; the tractor, chemical, fertilizer and petroleum industries who will find we will not be farming high cost products and will have no use for their materials, therefore they will have to cut down their work force.*

Such displacement (which was not at all borne out by subsequent events) would be little ameliorated by the mechanization many thought was inevitable if braceros were no longer available, according to Garin; indeed, it might just make it worse: "the dislocation and economic distress of our western farm community is certainly going to be very noticeable," he wrote.† Garin would have known: in

* There are any number of grounds on which to dispute the claim that growers like Garin received no government support, ranging from the depressive effects on wages of the bracero program to direct subsidies for surplus crops; for his part, Ben Yellen consistently found that in Imperial County, while urban land uses (businesses, homes) were consistently assessed for tax purposes at 25–35 percent of market value, farm land was assessed at 6–12 percent of market value. Yellen to Galarza, October 27, 1963, Galarza Papers, Box 16, File 4.

† Warnings of scaled-back agriculture in California had already been aired in the press. The *New York Times*, for example, reported on a University of California study that predicted a 30 percent decline in cantaloupe acreage with the end of the program; it also reported that *California Farmer* magazine estimated that asparagus acreage would be cut by one-third, and that more mechanized crops, like sugar beets, beans, and alfalfa, would quickly replace let-

anticipation of the end of the bracero program, he had begun investing heavily in western Mexico,* where wages for cantaloupe harvesting averaged about fifteen pesos a day (at a time when about twelve pesos equaled a dollar), while also planning significant disinvestment in the California landscape.[16]

Even as Garin was planning to shift investment to Mexico, other growers and their lobbyists were once again descending on Capitol Hill in an effort to resurrect the bracero program. Somewhat surprisingly, growers found they had a partial ally in the Mexican government, which feared the disruptive economic and political effects of the sudden termination of the program. Mexico argued that the end of the program would not slow the northward migration of Mexican workers, "but rather give rise to a de facto situation: the illegal introduction of Mexican workers," in the words of a diplomatic note quoted by bracero historian Richard Craig. The Mexican government also averred, not very convincingly, that the bracero program ought to continue because the relatively decent treatment bracero workers received under the international agreement "provided a pattern that can be followed for domestic workers who lack" such treatment. Nor was its contention that the bracero program had promoted the "virtual extinction of discrimination against and segregation of persons of Mexican Nationality in areas of the United States where such practices once existed" very convincing. Mexico's most persuasive argument, instead, was that it was deeply concerned with the economic effects the end of the program would have when "approximately 200,000 persons" were thrown out of work, especially given the important role bracero remittances had assumed in the Mexican rural economy.†[17]

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tuce. "Bracero Status Causes Concern: Coast Farmers Cite Losses if Mexican Labor Ends," *New York Times*, August 18, 1963.

* Not an empty threat, the first attempts by Garin to invest in Mexico were not a success either. Garin told Vizzard that the grower he contracted with failed to properly water and fertilize his crop. Nor did this failed attempt dissuade Garin from continuing to seek investments in Mexico, predicting that by late 1965 his newest round "will put Yuma, Arizona out of production. Why shouldn't we?" Garin to Vizzard, June 2, 1964, October 26, 1965, both in Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8.

† In 1964, more than 177,000 Mexican workers entered the United States under the bracero program. In a theme that was to become pervasive over the next several decades, California Representative Robert Leggett wrote to Father Vizzard outlining the high wages paid in California and telling of "two young professors who finished a two year tour of Mexico with a Quaker Friends service organization and they advise that the Bracero homes are readily identifiable in Mexico by television antennas." Later it was satellite dishes that marked the homes of Mexicans who had (or who continued to) work in the United States. Leggett to Vizzard, October 21, 1963, Vizzard Papers, Box 31, File 78.

Growers and the Mexican government were joined by California Governor Brown—an opponent of the program when he entered office—in urging the resurrection of PL 78. Brown's position was supported by the CFBF and other organizations, which had organized a California small-farmer letter-writing campaign. With this backing, and finding allies in the Senate, especially after the Mexican position became public, defenders of the program were able to get the Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee to approve a one-year extension of the program, in a bill that included an amendment requiring that growers offer domestic workers housing, occupational insurance, transportation, and a guaranteed work period before they could be certified for braceros. Soon thereafter the Senate overwhelmingly approved the one-year extension, and narrowly passed the amendment protecting domestic workers. By the end of the summer, the House Committee on Agriculture passed a similar bill (after earlier considering a bill by Representative C. M. Teague, which would have phased the program out over three years), but only after stripping out the domestic worker amendment. On Halloween day the full House reversed itself and voted (173–160) to extend PL 78 for a year, until December 31, 1964. The Senate acquiesced to the House version a month later. PL 78, an emergency measure passed in 1951 (and itself building on an emergency program started in 1942), would live another year.[18]

But then it would die—though, as we will see, its death was protracted.* Agribusiness as a whole, and perhaps particularly California growers, realized the program no longer had political support in Washington. As Richard Johnson of the CFBF (speaking for "a fully unified California Agriculture") put it in testimony at a one-day hearing on farm labor program Governor Brown held in March 1964:

> We are resigned to the fact that Congress does not intend to renew Public Law 78, whereby Mexican Braceros have been used to supplement our domestic labor force. This does not in any way mean to say that California farmers repudiate the Bracero program or any other supplementary foreign labor program. We are just recognizing that agriculture's opponents have exerted their influence in Congress and received public commitments from elected representatives stating that they no

* Some growers were involved in concerted efforts during 1965 to revive the program, but many had begun to seek other sources of labor—as we will see, PL 414 became quite important in helping secure this (as it still is)—or to rework the labor process to meet the new realities. See Craig, *Bracero Program*, 196; "Younger Asks Extension of Bracero Plan: Action Needed to Save Crops," *San Mateo Times*, December 7, 1964, 1; "Kuchel Leads Move to Revive Bracero Bill," *Bakersfield Californian*, January 2, 1965, 1; Murray Norris, "Farm Labor Woes Mount for 1965," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, January 2, 1965, 3.

> longer will support such a program. Unfortunately, the church groups, labor organizations, and others who have so consistently fought the foreign supplemental labor program do not have to stand and answer once the program is terminated.[19]

Like other representatives of agribusiness in California, and indeed like a number of state officials, Johnson argued that it was incumbent upon the government—both federal and state—to develop another equally large, equally pliable labor source to replace the braceros.*

Even before California agribusiness had mustered its forces to assure the one-year extension of PL 78, liberal members of Congress were already fashioning programs to supply these alternate sources, if not quite on the terms many growers sought. Within days of the original House defeat of the PL 78 extension, Los Angeles Representative Ed Roybal introduced legislation "to establish a systematic program of recruitment, transportation and work contracts for U.S. farm workers to replace the . . . Mexican 'bracero' farm labor program." His bill essentially proposed to revive the old FSA domestic workers transportation program Congress gutted in 1943 when it transferred farm labor program authority to the WFA. Roybal's bill promised government-furnished transportation for domestic workers, food and housing before distribution to farmers, and written contracts, only this time run out of the Department of Labor. This time growers were not automatically opposed to the plan—though they did continue to fight strenuously against federal involvement in regulating the conditions of domestic workers. Instead, they saw such domestic programs (if properly limited) as one, partial, solution to the loss of PL 78 workers.[20]

Other solutions to the pending loss of braceros were also mooted. For example, even as he was voting to extend the bracero program through the end of 1964, California Senator Clare Engel reported that about 1,200 growers in Tulare County had created an association with these goals: "First, to train domestic farmworkers; second, reschedule the timing of farming operations—such as planting and harvesting—in order to spread out labor requirements as much as possible on a year-round basis; third, change crop patterns to help accomplish the same thing—that is, reduce the labor peaks of highly seasonal crops and thereby extend employment; and, fourth, coordinate these activi-

* Later in the hearing, the master of the California Grange disputed the degree to which Johnson (and other agribusiness representatives) spoke for all California agriculture, but he too argued that the end of the program posed a "serious threat to producers of food and fiber" in California. *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 23–24. Bracero program critics pointed out several times that California agribusiness's announcement that this time it would not seek renewal of PL 78 when it expired, was hedged with too many caveats to be trusted; see pp. 26, 55–56.

ties among association members in the interest of diversity and efficiency." Whatever the promise of such changes in the labor process—changes that had been advocated by progressive reformers long before Davis McEntire laid out a similar plan as a viable alternative to the first bracero importation in 1942—big growers like William Garin quickly branded them "impractical" for large-scale, single-crop agriculture like he was engaged in. What growers wanted was not so much changed labor and agricultural practices, but a replacement labor source, and one that would cause as little disruption to sedimented ways of deploying labor and growing profits as possible. What they wanted, simply, was that the "Bracero gap" be "closed in an effective—sensible—and practical manner." Perhaps not surprisingly, Roybal's bill and others like it were killed in committee when the Senate and House decided to extend PL 78 through 1964.[21]

One avenue to achieve the growers' goal, perhaps, was to better exploit provisions of PL 414, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (the McCarran-Walter Act) that allowed for the temporary importation of foreign labor (administered by the INS, which could often be friendly to agricultural interests) when there was a certified labor shortage—a program also known as H2 for the section of the act that allowed it. The H2 program had been used by agribusiness from its inception, especially in the East and Florida, but it was until this point only a minor player in California (even if the thousand or so Japanese workers imported annually played a significant role in some crops).[22]

While the H2 program would grow in importance as a labor source in the ensuing years, at first the Johnson administration—in the person of Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz—sought to limit its reach by imposing on it regulations strengthening wage requirements for domestic workers before H2 importation would be certified, applying housing and other benefits to H2 workers that had been guaranteed braceros, and limiting certification of need to four months. Wirtz hoped such regulation would stymie growers' attempts to expand the use of H2 as a de facto PL 78 replacement. Wirtz was responding at least to some degree to the concerns of anti-bracero forces who argued that H2 importations were potentially worse than PL 78 importations, since H2 workers had neither the statutory guarantees imported workers had under PL 78, nor especially the agreements as to working conditions the international agreement with Mexico was supposed to vouchsafe. As Reverend Vizzard put it, under H2, imported Mexican workers "are free to be exploited in the same way our domestic workers always have been."[23]

With the end of PL 78 in sight and without totally pliable H2 workers yet guaranteed, 1964 turned into a year of experimentation. The FPS pushed for increased use of "day-haul" programs (in essence, securing day labor at skid

row shapeups) but also realized that the growth of cities and suburbia, pushing agriculture farther from city centers, made such programs in some regions (like Los Angeles or the San Francisco Bay Area) increasingly obsolete, especially since federal guidelines declared a one-hour travel time from shapeup to job site to be a fair limit on the "reasonable effort" requirement made on growers to obtain domestic workers through day-haul before being certified for foreign workers. It thus also experimented with a "week-haul" program. In the first of these experiments, FPS staff distributed commercial bus tickets to Americans of Mexican descent living in Tijuana to work on farms in Oceanside, north of San Diego. Not bound to specific associations or growers by contracts as were braceros, many of these week-haul workers abandoned the job they were sent to for work that paid better elsewhere (some, reportedly, just never showed up for work, using the bus tickets for other purposes).[24]

In another experiment, the FPS worked with the Los Angeles Department of Community Services to recruit forty workers to be sent to Ventura for the orange harvest. Workers were contracted to leave early Monday mornings and return after Saturday morning work. In between they would stay in growers' camps (with a $1.75 charge for board) and be guaranteed $1.00 per hour. Few workers were recruited (eight the first week, eleven the next, thirty-four the final week), and growers complained that those who were recruited were unskilled and found the work "too difficult"; many quickly quit. Growers declared the recruited workers to be the "dregs of humanity." An official involved in the program, however, averred that growers were never serious about the experiment, but were merely "putting on a show to gather material to present before Congress" proving adequate domestic labor was not available. Other week-haul attempts were made in early 1964 with similar results (and with growers complaining they were being asked to be a "social worker for the city unemployed when [they] had [their] own labor supply problem"). In yet another experiment Reverend Vizzard of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference banded together with William Garin to solicit the cooperation of various dioceses in Texas to recruit Mexican Americans—"Texicans," they called them—to come to California in something like a "seasonal-haul program" to replace the departing braceros, an attempt Texas Representative Henry Gonzalez later explained failed because Texas farm workers had long ago given up on California as a destination for work because of its heavy reliance on braceros. The "serious indictment" Congressman Roybal identified, in other words, was not just the rotten wages and conditions, but the very fact that it was now nearly impossible to provide the labor force the landscape required *unless* it closely resembled labor made available by the bracero program.[25]

Nonetheless, experimentation continued. Many growers and their advocates pinned their hopes on recruiting youth to work in the fields. Growers' representatives saw a possible avenue in Clark Kerr's Master Plan for higher education in California, which advocated not only the expansion of the higher education system but also the transformation of universities into year-round institutions. This meant the implementation of quarter systems that would allow "many . . . young men" to take the fall quarter off to work the fields. Such workers were desirable because they could be housed in the "already established quarters for Nationals of another Nation, with a minimum amount of adjustment," as the master of the California Grange suggested. Indeed, "many of these young people would already be familiar with similar accommodations at scout camps, as would those who had already received some military training. They would not require wall-to-wall carpeting or harmonizing draperies—they would be strictly for the business at hand, temporary and sanitary living quarters; while the young men were earning needed funds in agriculture."*[26]

In a notable experiment, Secretary of Labor Wirtz sponsored the creation of "A-Teams": Athletes in Temporary Employment as Agricultural Manpower. A-Teams of twenty to thirty high school boys, sold on the idea that summer agricultural work would keep them fit over the summer ("Farm Work Builds Men!" was the slogan) were to be supervised by their teachers or coaches and organized essentially as rapid response teams deployed to harvests needing labor.† Melon growers in Blythe were among the first to take advantage of this new program, renting twenty-five apartments to house students (and chaperons) from San Diego and arranging for the use of the local high school cafeteria and the services of a dietician. Begun in a spirit of great bonhomie, the experiment with the A-Teams in Blythe ended in dissention as growers laid off many

* Of larger importance to the availability of youth for the harvest than a year-round university schedule, probably, was that the massive expansion of the state university in the 1960s meant not that more young men (and perhaps women) would be available for farm work, but rather that more men and women would see college as a viable alternative, especially as victories in the civil rights movement and its progeny were slowly prying open campuses for nonwhite citizens. Indeed, growers knew better than to believe their own propaganda and never really got serious about recruiting youth on anything like an industrial scale. Perhaps this is why Governor Brown also mooted a plan to offer probation to "youngsters who have trouble with the law"—delinquents, as the papers called them—in exchange for their agreeing to do farm work. "Delinquents Proposed for Farm Labor: Brown Claims Support for Phase-Out," *San Mateo Times*, December 1, 1964, 1.

† At its peak, the A-Team program employed some 3,225 high school boys across the whole of the United States. "Termination of the Bracero Law," remarks of Representative Cohelan, *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27740.

of the high-schoolers at the tail end of the harvest to avoid paying a five cents per hour end-of-season bonus. The boys staged a sit-in in protest.* In another notable instance thirty-seven African American teens from Selma—"most of them veterans of the Selma-to-Montgomery, Ala. civil rights march"—who had been imported under a church-based "Help Our Selma Teenagers" (HOST) program walked off their jobs on a Salinas strawberry farm when the owner fired their chaperon-manager because he refused to force them to increase their rate of picking by 50 percent.[27]

An obvious problem with all these experiments was they typically relied on single-male labor (including the A-Teams, for whom special housing was often provided, though the Selma group was mixed gender) when much of the domestic labor supply (including especially Mexican American workers) was family based. As Keith Mets of the IVFA and the California Growers Farm Labor Committee richly testified in March 1964, family labor presented a particular problem because of a "lack of availability of family housing to accommodate these workers and their families." This problem plagued another experiment. Carl Maggio (son of the Imperial Valley "Carrot King") agreed to work with the FPS to recruit workers through unemployment offices. The workers were to be guaranteed 150 hours of work a month (37.5 hours a week) year-round. Workers for Carl Maggio, however, were housed in old partially converted boxcars, "which means that there are no family housing units in this area," as Labor Undersecretary John Henning rather laconically testified before the Governor's Hearing on Farm Labor. Henning thus named (once again) the enduring fact of the California landscape during the bracero era, right from the FPC's first intervention: the *active* production of a family housing shortage in favor of housing seen to be only suitable for braceros or other ready-organized single men. Indeed, many California and federal officials, as well as farm labor activists, were coming to think the problem of housing would be the primary challenge of the post-bracero era.[28]

In hearings before the USDL at the end of 1964, Reverend Vizzard made clear where he thought blame for the family housing shortage ought to lie:

> Family housing, they [the growers] say, is not available. Of course not. When they thought they could forever count on getting braceros, the growers in California and elsewhere tore down what little family housing they had then, because citizen workers with families would not accept jobs where there was no housing,

* Such labor agitation was a constant feature of the program as A-Team members simply refused to abide by the conditions growers by now took for granted as acceptable for farm workers. "A-TEAM Labor Program Starts to Work," *Bakersfield Californian*, June 22, 1965, 8.

> the growers demanded braceros because "no domestics are available." To me this sounds like the son who murdered his parents and then pleaded for mercy because he was an orphan. During the several years when it was becoming increasingly obvious that the bracero program would eventually have to be ended, the growers made no efforts to develop family housing nor to take advantage of the several federal programs which could have helped them to do so. Even at this late date, if they acted with dispatch, they could have housing ready by next spring or summer.

It was not likely that California growers would act with dispatch. Speaking for the California Growers Farm Labor Committee, Keith Mets made it clear that growers did not think farm worker housing for families was a grower responsibility (it was a responsibility of "ALL Californians"), while also arguing that what was needed was not a crash building program, but a study to "determine once and for all" the "statewide need for family housing." The CFBF was more nuanced—and interesting—in its arguments, pointing out that requiring growers to provide housing was a mistake because "we are not sure that housing on the farm lends itself to . . . freedom of bargaining between employer and employee"—a position a far cry from the one it took in the 1940s and 1950s. It further argued state or federal "government housing communities" were no answer either because they tended to "separate these people out from the community in which they live" and create a "ghetto" that would merely become a rallying point for the "usual groups and their spokesmen." Liberal advocacy groups, farm labor contractors, and farm workers alike all similarly made it clear that farm worker housing located on the farms and controlled by growers typically led to an "undesirable company town situation" and a perversion of the labor market.[29]

Such studies as those advocated by Mets were, of course, already in abundance. And at the beginning of 1964, when it was clear that PL 78 really was going to expire, Governor Brown had made a forceful call for the construction of low-cost housing for farm working families in agricultural districts. A California Senate Fact-Finding Committee examining housing conditions in the rural valleys had declared that the "generally terrible living conditions endured by most domestic seasonal farm workers, together with the basic importance of agriculture to California make state action on farm housing . . . an immediately critical issue." But for the Fact-Finding Committee, the root of the problem was not in fact housing, but rather the inability of farm workers "to buy rent or shelter" because of low wages (exactly the low wages that were the *result* of twenty-two years of access to braceros). Interestingly, *California Farmer* (heir to

the influential *Pacific Rural Press* and mouthpiece of farmers'—including small farmers'—common sense) agreed with this assessment:

> What about the claim we pay more money? We are told that when it gets down to actual bidding for workers, it's a myth. Growers from other areas faced with the problem of getting a perishable product to harvest can and often do, not only meet, but better our actual dollar and cents. Our statewide average wage for imported domestic farm workers is no higher than in other states. Not only do they match our wages, they beat our pants off in offering side benefits. We are dead on housing before we start. Workers in Texas, Mississippi, Missouri and other labor surplus states often sign up to work in any state except California because we have little family housing.

Large growers, of course, remained staunch in their opposition to a state—and for many even a federal—minimum wage or any form of employment insurance for farm workers as well as in their insistence that California growers paid better than their counterparts in other states.[30]

And no wonder. As Thomas Pitts, secretary-treasurer of the CFL, testified before the Governor's Hearing, 61 percent of the farm labor in California was hired by only 4.9 percent of the farmers—the "Montgomery Street farmers," he called them (after the main street of San Francisco's financial district). For them the wage bill was critical. But it was not as critical as the *dependability* and the *predictability* of the labor supply, as Lloyd Fisher had shown a decade earlier, and which the various, often desperate experiments in procuring labor in 1964 and 1965 made plain. Family labor, large growers seemed to be making clear, was not dependable labor, at least in its current form—hence their disinclination to support a massive rural housing program. Instead, two other possibilities seemed worth pursuing: the creation of what critics took to calling a "domestic bracero program" (a program to recruit domestic workers on terms of control as favorable to growers as was the bracero program itself); and a lessening of the labor secretary's grip on PL 414 (freeing up thousands of H2 workers, many of whom presumably would be former braceros, as well as commuting workers known as "green carders").[31]

New Braceros?

Growers made a show, at least at first, of supporting a program for the mass recruitment of domestic workers even as they worked to assure that such programs were conducted on their own terms alone. In early 1964, the California Growers Farm Labor Committee endorsed "a massive domestic recruiting

program, seeking qualified farm workers wherever available and in areas of unemployment, not only throughout California, but throughout the nation, wherever workers may be." But growers also asserted such a program had to be well planned and at least as dependable as the bracero program. A last-minute recruiting drive was insufficient because "if growers are to plant crops which require vast numbers of workers for short periods of time, *they* must know from six to nine months in advance that there *will* be sufficient numbers of workers on hand who are willing, able, and qualified to do the job"—precisely the labor market insurance the bracero program provided. As put by UC Berkeley agricultural economist Eric Thor (lead author of an influential report supporting the growers' desire for access to foreign workers), "the state's bankers, who finance most of the state's vegetable crops, are concerned over the situation."[32]

For its part, organized labor was dubious, publicly warning against the creation of a "domestic bracero program" that placed domestic workers imported from other states into the sort of indenture that defined braceroism (the CFL's Pitts wryly commented at one hearing that the only "serious" effort by growers to recruit *California* farm workers was to seek access to convict labor; growers, he averred, had little interest in "a free labor market"). Instead, union representatives and liberal activists called for "the immediate passage of both the State and Federal labor relations act establishing the rights of farm workers to self-organization and collective bargaining" as well as "additional legislation to abolish discriminatory exclusion of farm workers from unemployment insurance, full Social Security coverage, and other benefits enjoyed by nonfarm workers," as Louis Krainock (now identifying himself as working for the California Agricultural Union) put it. As Krainock noted, with some justification, without such protections, farm work would remain a "depressed, casualized surplus labor market," and therefore unpredictable.[33]

Indeed, Lincoln Fairley, the research director of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union in San Francisco, testified before the 1964 Governor's Hearing about the benefits of decasualization (which adequate legal protection would do much to advance, but which a "domestic bracero program" would likely undermine). Before 1934, Fairley testified, longshore work, which was irregular and seasonal, was also highly casual, with a "low quality of workers because the first class workers are not attracted by fourth class employment opportunities" (growers frequently complained about the quality of domestic workers applying to them). But "now this is completely changed. The supply of workers is regulated by the union [and] the Pacific Maritime Association, the employers' association with whom we signed the longshore contract." Wages were good, and whenever new job slots were available, there were thousands

more applicants than slots. "The transformation was brought about by decasualizing the work. The union and the employers maintain a single dispatch hall in each port area. All longshoremen are jointly registered. There are even provisions for transfer of men from port to port as job requirements demand. The two essentials have been, one, a strong union, and two, organization of the labor market so that there is neither an oversupply nor a shortage of workers." Such standard practices of job seniority (which already was also standard among agricultural workers in Hawaii), together with the security of unemployment insurance, kept longshore workers tethered to their jobs and provided a great deal of predictability in the labor market for worker and employer alike.[34]

Governor Brown heard this testimony (and that of the farmers) and despite his support for domestic farm worker rights when he entered office in 1959, decided mostly to ignore it. Instead, backed by the Teamsters and a report from progrower economists at the University of California, he lobbied the federal government strenuously to allow PL 414 importation in 1965 at levels nearly as high as those for PL 78 in 1964, and for a gradual ratcheting down in the ensuing four years until all importations from Mexico were eliminated by 1969. Such a plan, Brown argued, would allow for a gradual and considered development of institutions for recruiting sufficient numbers of domestic workers, to which he also proposed the development of a "master plan" for agricultural workers covering "housing, day care centers, education, sanitation, training programs, migrant service centers and rest stops for travelling workers"—essentially a slightly pared-down suite of interventions just like those proposed by the Governor's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley in 1951 (but which were never acted on, given the seemingly endless stream of braceros PL 78 provided).[35]

Labor Secretary Wirtz was not swayed by Brown's arguments. He wanted an immediate reduction of Mexican labor importations, and "hopefully" even their total elimination. At the end of the year, just as the bracero program was set to expire (and even as braceros still in the state were being repatriated), Wirtz announced the creation of twelve emergency task forces—four of them in California—composed of USDL as well as state FPS staff to recruit domestic workers in "labor surplus" cities and states and deploy them to growers to replace the departing braceros. Calling this "the most massive recruitment effort ever made" of domestic farm workers, Wirtz argued that success would "depend on the willingness of employers to offer attractive wages and on the willingness and availability of qualified domestic workers to take agricultural jobs." Wirtz soon provided the incentive for this willingness. He set minimum wages (variable by state: California's was $1.25 per hour, rising to $1.40 on April

1). He also required growers to provide housing (they could charge for board), transportation, pay guarantees, and workman's compensation. The stick was PL 414 workers: Wirtz made their certification, should they be needed, contingent upon attempts to recruit domestic workers under these conditions.[36]

Potential workers appeared at the recruiting centers—such as the one in Bakersfield—in large numbers, though not a few quickly walked off their assigned jobs in Orange County and elsewhere because of low pay (one paystub examined by the Associated Press showed that after deductions for room and board, gloves, and withholding tax, a lemon worker made eight cents for a week's work). For their part, however, growers proved reluctant to participate in the USDL program. Or rather they were obstructive. On December 28, 1964, the IVFA put in an order for 1,800 lettuce workers to be recruited through the new program. Two days later, the IVFA rescinded the order, claiming the workers so far referred to them were no good, and that it could not rely on the USDL's screening process.* Yet even as the telegram canceling the order was being sent (and apparently before he saw it), the "captain" of the Bakersfield recruiting team told reporters that "some growers [from the Imperial Valley] hadn't kept their promises to send buses to pick up the workers, while others kept domestic field hands waiting at the Bakersfield Farm Labor Office for eight hours before they showed up with buses." The captain also said he had to secure housing and food from the Salvation Army and other agencies for the potential workers while they cooled their heels waiting for transportation to the Imperial. Even officials often sympathetic to grower concerns were scathing in their criticism of IVFA. Don Larin, the deputy director of the FPS in California (and a longtime foe of Ernesto Galarza), pointed out the FPS now had on hand twice as many qualified domestic workers as it could place. Nonetheless, growers were not reluctant to claim, one day in, that crop losses, particularly in citrus, but also in celery, could be laid right at the door of the USDL for its refusal to certify the use of more Mexican PL 414 workers.[37]

The IVFA was playing a high-stakes game. In early January, Edward Hayes noted that the end of the bracero program and the USDL-FPS recruitment drive had "brought many new people to our area but few workers" even as Wirtz held firm in his determination that he would not approve PL 414 workers for

* A report to the California Assembly Committee on Agriculture claimed the reason the IVFA cancelled its order was because the harvest was nearly finished and growers "found it impossible to assimilate the new workers into the regular bracero crews who were still there under contract" as the year ended. This account does not jibe with either the timing of the harvest or any other accounts I have been able to uncover. "The Bracero Program and Its Aftermath: An Historical Summary," 15–16.

the Valley, now precisely because the IVFA had cancelled its order for domestic workers. By the end of March, growers in the Imperial were claiming they had no need for domestic workers—largely because they refused to abide by the requirements set by the USDL (though Bud Antle argued that all growers really had to do to find enough qualified workers was train them)—even though they had increased lettuce acreage by almost 17 percent (to forty thousand acres) over 1964. At the same time Imperial lettuce growers complained of their "greatest loss ever," shipping only 80 percent of their harvest. Antle claimed these losses were due to a national lettuce glut—growers "were dumping lettuce all over the United States"—not a labor shortage. Indeed, according to Antle, Imperial Valley growers "know they can get labor or they would not fly in the [face] of the Secretary by refusing his criteria." But where?[38]

The answer for growers in the Imperial was—as it had long been—Mexico, but now drawing more heavily on the large pool of daily commuters, as well as workers willing to cross the line illegally, than they had when braceros were regularly arriving. They also had access to a significant pool of PL 414 workers, even if the labor secretary tended to downplay their presence. An analysis prepared at the beginning of April for the California Assembly Committee on Agriculture held that at the end of 1963, there were between 32,000 and 38,000 Mexican immigrants working in California who had been admitted under H2 provisions for up to 3 years (and an even larger number who had come into California to work in agriculture but had left for other employment). Most of these workers lived in California, but a significant number lived in Mexicali or Tijuana and commuted daily across the border for work. There was an unknown number of undocumented workers in the area, but it seemed clear their number was beginning to rise as the bracero program ended, and certainly exceeded forty thousand in the state. Growers were convinced that together these sources would provide all the labor they needed. They must have been, for while renewing the traditional call for a revival of the bracero program or loosened PL 414 restrictions, the IVFA's Keith Mets expected there would be no scaling back—indeed, there would probably be an increase—of lettuce acreage in the coming year. There is also some evidence, though circumstantial, that Secretary Wirtz was willing to tolerate the use of commuting and other green card workers because they were typically counted as *domestic* workers in the periodic surveys of the labor force conducted by the USDL, thus making domestic recruitment appear stronger than it really was at a crucial ideological moment.[39]

Despite his antipathy toward the use of PL 414 (H2) workers, and despite his conviction that the horrible conditions many growers provided for domestic workers exacerbated the problem in California, Wirtz eventually did certify

importations. Only a month after the California Department of Employment ordered most H2 Japanese and Filipino workers in the Southland citrus harvest out of the orchards because of a surplus of domestic labor workers, Wirtz approved the reemployment of six hundred of them for the Ventura lemon harvest. Two months later, California director of employment Albert Tieberg requested Wirtz certify nearly 1,000 PL 414 imports to work the Riverside melon harvest (on top of an earlier request for about 3,200 workers from strawberry and asparagus growers). Wirtz was slow to act. As the summer progressed, and the drumbeat of requests quickened, however, Wirtz began to lift the reins. But he never certified PL 414 workers at the rate growers would have liked. All told, over the course of 1965 and across the whole of the United States, 20,284 PL 414 workers were approved (compared with 177,763 PL 78 workers the year before). So unpopular among growers was Wirtz for his insistence that growers actively avail themselves of recruited domestic workers before PL 414 certification that grower-friendly senators (led by California's George Murphy) engineered legislation to strip him of his power to determine foreign labor need and to transfer it to the secretary of agriculture, just as Congress had stripped the worker-friendly FSA of its power in 1943. The plan was defeated only when Vice President Hubert Humphrey cast "his first decisive tie-breaker" to kill the bill.[40]

In California in 1965, the number of foreign farm workers averaged 2,800 a month, or 1.3 percent of the total average agricultural worker force. In 1964, foreign workers, averaging 28,000 a month, had comprised 12.4 percent of the total. At the same time, total farm employment was falling, "a continuation of a long term trend" (it had dropped 16% since 1955). And yet, the number of domestic seasonal workers increased. The total number of workers hired exceeded the total for any year since 1955 in both absolute and percentage terms. Wages to domestic workers went up 23 percent in 1964—about $111 million over a nine-month period—according to one accounting. Simultaneously, labor processes were rapidly changing. For example, in 1963, the first year they were used, there were 25 machines picking one-half of 1 percent of the canning tomato harvest; in 1964, there were 70 machines; in 1965, 262 machines were at work on 30 percent of the harvest; 900 machines were expected to be deployed by 1966. Obviously, a rapid structural transformation of the California agricultural landscape seemed (finally) to be afoot.[41]

Landscape

Power Materialized

GEOGRAPHY SCULPTS THE FUTURE, for sure, but where does that "geography" come from? How is it produced? What is it? To return to one of the early questions of this book, just what gives "things on the land" their shape and structure (and thus their power to sculpt the future)? Historical geographer Richard Schein defines the landscape as "discourse materialized." Drawing on James Duncan, Schein defines discourse as those "shared meanings which are socially constituted, ideologies, sets of 'common sense' assumptions." Any "discourse is a 'social framework of intelligibility, within which all practices are communicated, negotiated, or challenged.'" This has implications for how we understand the production of landscape: "Each seemingly individual decision behind any particular U.S. landscape is embedded within a discourse. When the action results in a tangible landscape element, or a total ensemble, the cultural landscape becomes the *discourse materialized*. Examples of such discourses might include zoning theory and practice, architectural design trends, economic consumption patterns and others." But landscape is not passive, merely a receptacle of discourse as it were. Rather, "as a material component of a discourse or a set of intersecting discourses, 'the cultural landscape' at once captures the intent and ideology of the discourse and is a constitutive part of its ongoing development and reinforcement."[1]

This is obviously true: as the preceding pages have made abundantly clear, the struggles over and in the fields and labor camps of the state have been waged at the level of discourse, through which meanings have been constituted and contested. No doubt the myriad actions—from FPC attempts to rapidly build housing for braceros to tomato growers' rapid adoption of mechanical harvesters after the demise of the program, from DiGiorgio's attempts to sequester *Poverty in the Valley of Plenty* to militant workers rushing the gates of the Dannenberg labor camps—that have resulted in (the reshaping of) tangible landscape elements have been "embedded within a discourse": discourses of economically squeezed farmers, of vilification of bracero workers (or their veneration), of racial or gender fitness to perform certain kinds of work or live in certain ways, of public health and public safety, of economic and political rights and moral wrongs, and so much more. But to say that is to say not nearly enough.

"Discourse" is too thin a concept to bear the weight placed on it. What has been at stake in the making and remaking of the California landscape during the bracero era has not *only* been a "social framework of intelligibility" (and if the answer to that is to say that "discourse" really means all manner of practices, from meaning making to shifting investment from one place to another to jailing picketers to picking and packing lettuce to flushing the toilet, then the concept is simply meaningless). We need other ways to understand the morphology of landscape and the practices that are entwined with it.

If nothing else is apparent from the history of the bracero era in California, it is that creating a productive, capitalist farming landscape—agribusiness as it came to be in the twentieth century—together with the labor processes and systems of social reproduction that make such a landscape possible, has been a struggle. Nothing has been guaranteed, not from day to day, not from year to year, not across the whole era. Rather, the spatial arrangements that make production and reproduction possible have constantly to be *formed*. This is not to say that "individual agents [call] the landscape into being as they make it relevant for their own lives, projects, and strategies," as some geographers so solipsistically assert: nothing could be further from the truth. The landscape is already there and it persists: it shapes the conditions of possibility for its own reproduction (and that of the processes, people, and events within it—its own future). "Each individual decision" that makes and remakes—or just uses and reuses—the landscape is not only "embedded within a discourse," it is also a product of a history of struggles and practices, of ways of doing things, of the specific mandates of capital circulation and the logics of competitive capitalist production.[2]

Decisions are also embedded within a never-ending history of struggle: struggles with nature, struggles between capital and labor, struggles within the state, struggles engaged by actors possessed of differing levels of power and differing abilities to control the contexts within which they must operate. To reduce such struggles to "discourse" too easily abstracts from these relations of power and control, too easily turns attention from the issue of who is *able* to structure the landscape to meet their own needs and desires, to protect their own interests, and to sculpt what for them might be a good future. Landscape incorporates this history of struggle, development, and change, that's what it *is*, as Schein has made clear in his recent work. Landscape *is* the history of struggles over its form and its meaning and because of that landscape is a "facilitator [or] mediator of particular political, social, economic, and cultural intention[s] and debate[s]"—as well as (I would add) political, social, economic, and cultural *practices*. But if that is the case, then as Schein has shown so well, we also have

to be attentive to what does *not* appear in the landscape, what is *not* apparent in its morphology. The very traces of less-powerful groups can be erased, wiped out, their struggles simply not "materialized" in the landscape. This too is an effect of power.[3]

There is no need for a sophisticated theory of power, no need to worry about whether it is "capillary" or somehow "productive" rather than just prohibitive. Rather, power is always an empirical question. *Who* is able to act, now? *How* are they able to act: what is in place that makes their action possible? To what end are they acting? Yet there is a need to remember that power is not only the possession of individuals, groups, classes, institutions, or social relations (e.g., capital or the state): power is the "ability to . . . affect something" as the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* phrases it. The morphological landscape is structured through contested social relations and practices, but in turn, recursively, it shapes—affects—those social relations, establishing the terms of contestation (or the terms of just getting on). Even accounting for all the propaganda, all the ideology, at the heart of growers' arguments about why domestic and family labor was not suitable for harvest work in California, it was indubitably the fact that the landscape had been altered, its form shifted precisely to exclude family labor in favor of braceros. The landscape is thus not only "dead labor": it is dead labor with effects—precisely what Marx meant when he asserted that under capitalism dead labor comes to dominate living labor, for it is now the former that establishes the conditions that make the latter possible, rather than the other way around.

In this view the landscape is dynamic and fluid, but especially, as power materialized, it is solid—and all the more precarious for that.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Ever-New, Ever-Same

Labor Militancy, Rationalization, and the Post-bracero Landscape

Very likely, as you forecast, there will be a cutback in acreage this year. But my gambler's instinct (and you know I have it) tells me that the grower who secures a domestic work force even at considerable additional expense and who *expands* his acreage has the chance to make a fortune. The situation this year seems to me to be made to order for a person with initiative and guts.

Rev. James Vizzard to William Garin, January 11, 1965

The farm laborer—not a man easily aroused—is flexing new-found muscles in this kitchen garden of the nation and people are beginning to take notice. Like it or not, California agriculture—which used imported Mexican "Braceros" for many years to harvest much of the state's $1.2 billion vegetable and fruit crop—now depends solely on domestic workers.

Oxnard Press-Courier, August 26, 1965

PERHAPS THE MOST SURPRISING THING about the bracero era is how little the California landscape changed over its twenty-two years. Though they were occasionally militant, arriving in California with Octavio Rivas Guillen on September 22, 1942, were workers who were—to a degree unprecedented in the state's agricultural history—*captive*. Arriving on that first train was in essence a whole new era in labor relations, a new way of deploying labor on the land. Braceros provided "labor market insurance" of a kind and degree growers had never had access to before. If landscape theory is to be believed, then, with such a thoroughgoing change in the relations of labor, there ought to have been concomitantly thoroughgoing changes in the landscape that both supported and were produced by those relations.[1]

To be sure, there was both an expansion and a consolidation of farming during this era. Farmland in California grew by 21 percent between 1940 and 1964 (from 30,524,324 acres to 37,010,925 acres);* average farm size increased 99 percent (from 230.1 acres to 457.8 acres); after increasing from 132,658 in 1940 to 138,917 in 1945, the total number of farms in the state steadily declined to 80,852 by 1964, a 22 percent drop from the 1940 pre-bracero total.† Per farm value (in constant dollars) jumped almost 500 percent (from $16,331 in 1940 to $97,100 in 1964); per farm income increased a more modest 424 percent in constant dollars (from $3,741 to $19,600). The California share of total U.S. farm income increased from 6.8 to 9.9 percent.

There were other significant changes. As we saw, the bracero program eased the development of a new "monster machine"–based lettuce harvest labor process that fairly significantly reworked the landscape of that crop—making packing sheds obsolete while adding new cooling facilities in the Salinas and Imperial valleys.‡ And, of course, growers were able to avoid maintaining or building

* Farmland peaked in 1954 at 37,794,780 acres.

† This was part of a long-term secular decline that began before World War II (there were more than 150,000 farms in 1935) and continued after the end of the bracero program (by 1969, the number had decreased to 77,875).

‡ The case of cotton mechanization makes for a complicated comparison. By 1954, 62 percent of California cotton was mechanically harvested—by far the highest percentage in the United States (Arizona was second at 44%); by 1964, 97 percent was mechanically harvested. In the South, machine rates (costs) for harvesting exceeded piece rates for hand harvesting until the late 1950s; in the far West costs of machine harvesting dropped below hand labor during World War II, and stayed far lower throughout the postwar period. See Peterson and Kislev, "Cotton Harvester in Retrospect." The authors make no mention of the bracero program and so venture no hypotheses as to the relatively high piece rates in cotton in the West; they do argue that the "extensive, level fields of California and Arizona together with relatively high yields, dry weather during the harvest season, and a small weed problem lowered the cost of

housing for family-based farm workers while also gaining effective control over the government-built labor camps of the 1930s and the war years.

Such alterations should not be minimized, but they also need to be understood in context. At the outset of World War II, a range of commentators were predicting, hoping for, or worried about quite massive, radical, wholesale changes in the farming system in California. From Carey McWilliams's call to, in essence, nationalize the fields of the state, to Davis McEntire's pleas for labor process rationalization in beets, to the La Follette Committee's argument that California agriculture had to be placed on a radically new footing if violations of the rights of labor were to be ended, to CFBF and Associated Farmers concerns that all such plans smacked of socialism or communism and thus thoroughly threatened their ways of life (whether they really did or not), California agriculture in 1941 seemed on the cusp of change.

Instead, the historic, traditional ways of doing capitalist agriculture in California, together with the landscape that supported these ways, *persisted*. "For much of the twentieth century," writes Richard Walker, "growers ruled the roost in California politics." There is little doubt about that (even if their power perhaps temporarily waned in the Pat Brown administration). But that does not mean they would necessarily prevail in protecting their interests and desires as the war began and Rivas boarded his train in Mexico City. They had to fight to keep and deepen, to hold, protect, and consolidate, what they had. There was any amount of intraclass struggle in this process, as the actions of Progressive growers like Harry Drobish, leftish (maybe even communist) growers like Bertha Rankin, or even iconoclastic agribusinessmen like Bud Antle, make clear.

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machine harvesting and hastened its adoption in those states" (205–6). Denis Nodín Valdés does venture an explanation. Because of the mass oversupply of cotton labor in the West in the wake of the Dust Bowl, and even in the wake of the militant cotton strikes in the 1930s, cotton growers were slow to switch to braceros. In the wake of the NFLU cotton strikes of 1949–50 and their success in staving off wage cuts, "growers hastily purchased cotton harvesting machines and largely replaced the recently-settled resident Euro-American labor force with Mexican contract workers" for those tasks, and that part of the harvest, not yet mechanized: some nine thousand braceros were used in cotton in California in 1956. Braceros also proved to be a reliable source of strikebreakers. As in lettuce, then, braceros seem to have eased mechanization rather than forestalled it, which (we will see) in some ways it did with canning tomatoes, though the pathway to this easing was perhaps different from that taken in lettuce. For example, in lettuce, the immediate effect of mechanization was to increase labor demands, as we saw. In cotton, mechanization displaced labor in the sense that, given expansion of cotton production, nationally "mechanization offset the need to find more than four times as much labor for cotton picking in roughly a decade." Valdés, "Machine Politics in California Agriculture," 208, 210; number of bracero cotton workers from Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 89.

And interclass struggle had always to be confronted, whether it was manifest in the small strikes of braceros, the more organized actions of the NFLU, or the concerted efforts in Washington or Sacramento not only to eliminate the bracero program but to refound California agricultural labor relations on grounds better suited to those who did the work. What the struggle led to is what George Henderson has identified as "the ever-new, ever-same." His specific context is the nature of the agricultural wage labor market in California: the racist practices, the exclusionary legislation, the continual search for cheap labor that is at the same time totally controllable and reliable, that assured a constant turnover of labor (both ethnically and individually), together with the "resistance and reaction" such ever-new, ever-same practices inevitably begot. But his point is easily broadened: the ever-new, ever-same appalling conditions in the labor camps, the ever-new, ever-same consolidation of farms and intensification of farming that led to both a renewed landscape of large-grower domination and the continued need for worker mobility to "serve the crops," the ever-new, ever-same efforts to leverage a controlled labor supply such that mining profits out of a dry and reluctant ground was possible *despite* the high costs of irrigation and transportation, the uncertainty of markets, and the risks that always piled up between the time crops were planted and the time they were harvested. That growers were able to protect their investments in the landscape, and that a landscape that made possible the fulfillment of growers' very interests persisted so little changed throughout this whole period—as witnessed by the striking similarity between the descriptions and analysis of the Governor's Committee in 1950 and the California Senate in 1960—is proof positive that landscape is power materialized.[2]

Growers had a lot to lose with the demise of the bracero program. Workers, perhaps, had much to gain.

Insurgent Workers

In June 1965, the Tulare County Housing Authority decided to raise rents on its Woodville and Linnell farm labor supply camps by 54 percent. The old FSA camps were dilapidated. Working families still lived in single-room shacks, without glassed windows, with no plumbing, and measuring 11 x 16. Rents would now be $25 a month for a family of 4 (larger families could rent a second shack for $10). The housing authority claimed the rent increase was necessary to make repairs in the camp. Residents objected, claiming the authority possessed a reserve fund of $130,000 and "was banking $10,000 a month on opera-

tions" according to news reports.* Even the manager of the camp "question[ed] whether they [residents] are getting their money's worth out of the shacks," but defended the rate hike as necessary if improvements were to be made. Not buying this argument, the residents (most of whom were Mexican American) staged a rent strike and organized a 350-person-strong march into Visalia to publicize their complaints. News accounts suggested domestic workers were "flexing new-found muscles" now that the bracero program was over.[3]

It was not that simple, of course. For one thing, residents found what little lodging they had threatened by the very success of their protests. The Tulare County Health and Building Department ordered that the shacks be upgraded to code or demolished. Simultaneously, the Tulare Housing Authority started eviction proceedings against rent-striking tenants, issuing summonses to each striking family to show cause as to why they should not be evicted. This demand, strikers said, would be answered by the strikers' San Francisco attorney. For a second thing, then, this rent strike was not like so many wildcat strikes in postwar California: it had significant organizational support from "sympathetic welfare organizations and eager civil rights groups," as news accounts put it.[4]

The strikers' attorney was affiliated with the California Rural Legal Assistance Project, and his support and advice as the strike was being planned had been arranged by Gilbert Padilla, a CSO veteran, now working with the Council of Churches' Migrant Ministry as well as with the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). A few of the families in the Tulare camps were NFWA members. Founded in Delano in 1962 by César Chávez, the NFWA had been slowly building support among farm working families in the San Joaquin Valley. Chávez had resigned from the CSO when it refused to support a rural organizing program he championed. For a number of reasons—not least that his brother who might be able to support him materially lived there—Chávez moved with his family to Delano and created the Farm Workers Association, renamed the National Farm Workers Association in 1964, by which time his CSO comrades Delores Huerta and Gilbert Padilla had come aboard. The NFWA organized on a model not dissimilar to that of the AWA in Stockton before AWOC moved in, focusing

* These numbers are probably not to be taken at face value. Combined, the camps contained 426 metal "shanties"—which were at the center of the rent protest—83 garden apartments, 66 two- and three-bedroom apartments, 2 two-bedroom houses, 1 three-bedroom house, 1 duplex, and 1 staff apartment. According to a DoH study, the Linnell camp operated at a loss of $6.83 per unit in 1961; at Woodville, rental income exceeded expenses in 1958–59 by $48.21; in 1960–61, income exceeded expenses by $1.59. DoH, "Agricultural Labor Family Housing Study," part 1, Farm Labor Centers (San Francisco: DIR, December 15, 1961).

on bread-and-butter issues like housing, creating a credit union, insurance, help with workman's compensation, and the like. Chávez set dues at the high level of $3.50 a month and, in a departure from many unions and other organizations that had sought to address the rights and needs of farm workers, insisted dues be paid: hardship was almost never an excuse for missing payments. The idea was to assure real commitment to the organization. By 1964, there were some 1,500 active families in the southern San Joaquin Valley enrolled in the NWFA. When Tulare labor camp residents decided to strike against the housing authority in 1965, the NFWA was a reasonably strong, reasonably secure organization. Working with activists with experience in civil rights struggles, the NFWA and the renters won their strike, securing a court order requiring the housing authority to roll back the rent increases.*[5]

That was not the only reason "people . . . [began] to take notice" of farm workers in the "kitchen garden of the nation." AWOC was also resurgent, after a fashion. When the AFL-CIO resumed funding AWOC in 1962, it simultaneously reasserted its control, installing building-trades stalwart Al Green as president and reasserting the primacy of business unionism, rather than the social movement, community-organizing focus that had flourished under the volunteer organizers who kept the union going during the funding interregnum. AWOC concentrated most of its efforts on organizing labor contractors—perhaps not a bad strategy given their importance as labor-market mediators, but not terribly effective in developing rank-and-file membership and loyalty. Nonetheless, a decent number of Filipino workers had remained members, and relied on their own long history of self-organization to press their interests. First imported to California in large numbers in the 1920s, Filipino men worked in tight-knit crews, and having weathered decades of discrimination and violent struggles for wages and recognition, Filipino workers were not only skilled workers (specializing in pruning, grape harvesting, and other specialized labor), but they also could be impressively militant. Many were based in and around Delano where they kept their winter homes, typically in camps on growers' property. Filipino grape harvesters began their season in May in Coachella almost three hundred miles to the south, and steadily moved north, ending up in the extensive vineyards stretching from Delano to Fresno in September.[6]

Coachella grape growers had long relied on imported workers to get their crop in fast so it could beat all other regions to market. The Labor Department

* The NFWA was—reluctantly—involved in two other strikes in the first half of 1965 on horticultural farms. Working again with the Migrant Ministry, and despite difficult interethnic struggles, the NFWA managed to win small wage increases, increasing its profile among area farm workers.

had determined California growers had to pay domestic workers at least $1.40 per hour before they would be eligible to receive PL 414 workers from Mexico. Even so, growers offered Filipino crews only $1.25 an hour. Organized through AWOC, and under the leadership of Larry Itliong, Philip Vera Cruz, Ben Gines, and Andy Imutan, the workers struck. With access to PL 414 workers blocked because of the low-wage offer, growers quickly caved. As the season moved north, so did Filipino (and other worker) demands for $1.40 per hour. By contrast to their Coachella colleagues, grape growers in the San Joaquin Valley had not traditionally relied on braceros, finding enough impoverished local (usually ethnically Mexican) workers for their needs. An attempted strike by AWOC Filipinos in Arvin in June was quickly broken when labor contractors brought in domestic Mexican strikebreakers. In September 1965, growers in Delano therefore held fast to a $1.20–$1.25 wage (with a piece-rate bonus). About one thousand Filipino AWOC workers struck on September 8 and refused to leave their camps, engaging in "what amounted to a sit-down strike," as historians Linda Majka and Theo Majka put it. Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz threw their organizing skills into the struggle, even as the AWOC hierarchy in Stockton remained hesitant in its actions.[7]

Within two days, facing eviction, finding that growers were already recruiting replacements among Mexican Americans, and with little support from the AWOC hierarchy, some Filipinos began to return to work. Others remained militant, establishing pickets not only at vineyards but also at the packing plants growers were trying to keep open with Mexican American labor. It was a classic divide and conquer strategy. Itliong sought out Chávez to garner the support of the NFWA. Though NFWA had conducted strikes at two nurseries and the rent strike in the Tulare Camps, Chávez felt the association was not yet in a position to engage in a protracted battle with well-organized growers. Nonetheless, the NFWA urged its members to honor all picket lines, the effect of which was to ask them to also throw down their tools. Many members thus thought that they too ought to be making demands on their employers. At an emergency meeting held on Mexican Independence Day, September 16, nearly 1,500 members of the NFWA and their families filled a parish hall in Delano. Despite the obvious risks, NFWA workers voted unanimously to go on strike, a position Chávez now supported, despite misgivings. He prevailed on the workers to delay formal action until the following Monday—the twentieth—to give him time to meet with Itliong and Green of AWOC and to inform the growers association. The meeting with Green mostly came to naught. Green refused a joint-strike agreement (which would have left AWOC in charge) and offered precious little support to Itliong, essentially forcing Chávez and Itliong to conduct two simultaneous but

separate strikes. Itliong and Chávez worked out their own agreements. AWOC was currently striking ten vineyards, and the NFWA agreed to honor its pickets. The NFWA would call strikes against as many as thirty other grape growers in the region, which AWOC workers would likewise honor. Both would demand $1.40 per hour. By early October, the California Department of Employment had certified twenty strikes in the Delano area and the NFWA was picketing ten more in what "quickly turned into a war of attrition," as J. Craig Jenkins put it.[8]

Unlikely to win their demands in the traditional way, especially as growers ratcheted up *their* traditional ways—recruiting masses of strikebreakers (and not informing them that strikes were in progress as required by law), deputizing hundreds to patrol the streets, failing to refrain from violence—and drawing on their contacts with and commitments from civil rights veterans, radical students, and especially clergy,* Chávez and to some extent Itliong sought to turn the Delano strike into a cause, a *movement*. This history of this movement—its marches and boycotts, its insistence on nonviolence (often hard to enforce in the face of the withering violence of the growers), and its eventual victories—is well known, as is the eventual merger of AWOC and the NFWA to create the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, the immediate forerunner of the UFW.

But what needs to be noted is this: a crucial determinant in the prosecution of the war of attrition at the heart of the struggle centered on Delano was that growers had lost their labor market insurance—the bracero. It is not just that by refusing to pay $1.40 per hour, growers cut themselves off from PL 414 workers. Rather, the important point is that the supplementary, flexible, *controlled* labor source growers had come to rely on was now unsettled. Even if growers around Delano had themselves not relied on braceros to the extent growers in other regions had, the inexorable, and predictable, work of displacement that had been a primary result of decades of bracero importation and that had helped create "the chronically oversupplied labor market" in the southern San Joaquin was

* In December, Reverend James Vizzard of the Catholic Rural Life Conference went to Delano to support the strikers. His speeches there earned him a sharp rebuke from his grower–pen pal, William Garin, in what seems to be the last letter between the two: "Certainly your wobbly bunch in the grape deal are not representative of the makeup of the general working force, but are of the same caliber as the 'kooks' who are making such a noise at the University of California in regard to the Viet Nam fracas. In fact I think you will find the names of the placard carriers are duplicated in both endeavors. I repeat, as I have asked you before, why do you associate yourself with this caliber of people when there are decent people you could talk to if you were honest and open minded to both sides of the problem of labor and management. Merry Christmas." Garin to Vizzard, December 21, 1965, Vizzard Papers, Box 23, Carton 8.

now uncertain. Growers might find pools of labor elsewhere (indeed, eventually they would, especially in encouraging undocumented workers to cross the border),* but for now there was no guarantee. Secretary Wirtz's Labor Department did not seem particularly friendly to grower interests. It was not quite capital's foreman to the degree it had been; PL 414 workers were not as easily obtained as had been PL 78 workers. The modicum of rationality (from the growers' perspective) the bracero program had introduced into the California farm labor market had been eroded and it seemed to be returning to the "essential irrationality"† commentators had long remarked on.[9]

The new militancy of workers must be understood in relation to this loss of predictability (as well as in relation to the civil rights movement, the considerable organizing skills of Chávez, Huerta, Padilla, Itliong, Vera Cruz, and others, the importance of which the histories of the movement rightly stress). PL 414 workers were uncertain. And while growers quickly found that green card, commuting workers could be used as strikebreakers, their importance and reliability—and certainly the level of their indenture—was not yet clear. Nor was it yet clear whether the new labor militancy that the AWOC-NFWA alliance seemed to portend would hold. It was not yet clear, in other words, what *new* "rationality" might be inserted into the labor market in the face of the loss of braceros and the newfound worker militancy.[10]

Mechanizing and Managing the Landscape

The mid-1960s, in other words, represented a moment of "labor market adjustment." In turn, this seemed to be leading to a significant adjustment in the landscape. We've already seen that growers like William Garin quickly began planning to move production out of California and into Mexico. Even if, as with

* Even as the strike was deepening around Delano, the California congressional delegation was busy debating the degree to which "wetbacks" (as they continued to call them) were already taking the place of braceros. See *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27739–44; "Wetbacks Flood U.S. Farm Areas," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, September 2, 1965, A18; "Justice Department Asks Funds for Jailing Big Wetback Influx," *Long Beach Independent*, October 13, 1965, B8.

† As should be clear from all that has preceded, the "essential irrationality" of California agriculture developed because growers (and workers) acted essentially "rationally," and in their own interests. They sought, at every turn, to solve the problems (of growing, of labor deployment, of a desire for flexibility, etc.) that confronted them on a basis that *made sense*, given the constraints that faced them and the ideologies through which they understood the world. Here then is an essential fact of capitalism: its *systemic* irrationality is a function of its *local* rationality.

the case of Garin, this may not have been as easy or as successful as wished, it was also not an idle threat. In October 1965, Professor Coby Lorenzen of the Agricultural Engineering Department at UC Davis warned a California legislative Symposium on Farm Mechanization called to understand the prospect of machines replacing braceros, that given the difficulties of mechanizing the harvest "we might be on our way out of the strawberry market" because braceros were not available to pick the fickle fruit. He and many others expected production would shift to Mexico. Lorenzen's prediction proved inaccurate in this instance—for a number of complex reasons (especially a revolution in per-acre yield), strawberry production surged despite rapidly rising production and harvest labor costs (offset in part by the reintroduction of sharecropping)—but other crops were indeed abandoned in California.[11]

Even as Lorenzen was testifying, California Representative Samuel Gubser (longtime foe of Ernesto Galarza) simultaneously noted the rapid decline in the state's asparagus production, especially white asparagus, the entire U.S. commercial crop of which was grown only in California's San Joaquin Delta. He noted a 1.2 million case decline in 1965 over 1964—a 50 percent reduction in output—most of which historically had been destined for export, especially to Europe. (He also worried about a 2.6 million–pound reduction in processed frozen green asparagus.) An Extension Service study requested by Governor Brown and the State Senate showed asparagus acreage in California had peaked in 1959, but yield, total production, and tons exported had continued to rise through 1963. Gubser worried this sharp decline in asparagus production in 1964 had led to some $1.2 million in lost wages to packinghouse workers in the frozen pack alone; another $1 million in sales was lost by suppliers to the packing houses. He reported that some ten thousand acres of asparagus land had been taken out of production in 1964, and another five thousand acres was slated to be removed in 1965. Even with increased per acre yield this was a drastic reduction.[12]

Asparagus is a capital- and labor-intensive crop. It takes three years before an asparagus bed can be harvested. The production of white asparagus requires that dirt be mounded over spears to keep them from emerging. Once the asparagus is ready, harvesting is exceptionally labor intensive. Both green and white spears must be selectively harvested daily throughout the season, with white spears cut eight to ten inches below ground, mostly by feel. White and green harvesting is, thus, quite skilled (as well as back-breaking) work. In the cannery, white asparagus not only must be washed, sorted, and trimmed, but also peeled. Because of this "approximately four times as much labor is required to process a can of asparagus as a can of peas or tomatoes." When the bracero program

ended in 1964, about half the asparagus force of ten thousand were Mexican Nationals. They were especially heavily used in the white asparagus harvest. By 1971, white asparagus production had disappeared from California, and thus the United States, and total asparagus acreage continued to decline, if not quite as rapidly as Representative Gubser prophesied, nonetheless significantly and steadily; so did total production. By 1970, asparagus acreage was only 55 percent of the postwar peak (in 1959), while total production was 65 percent of the postwar peak (in 1963). By 1979, these percentages were 34 and 45, respectively.[13]

Between 1955 and 1960, piece rates for white asparagus cutting, where braceros were heavily used, did not budge, remaining at $3.25 per 100-weight. In 1961, they rose to $3.80, and in 1964 to $4.10. It was only in this latter year—the last year of the bracero program—that piece rates for white asparagus achieved parity with piece rates for green asparagus, where braceros were not as heavily used, despite the fact that white asparagus cutting was the harder task. Beginning in 1965, however, white asparagus piece rates skyrocketed, reaching $8.00 by 1970 (the last year of any significant white asparagus production), while green asparagus rates grew much more slowly, only achieving $6.75 that same year. Numerous attempts at mechanizing green and white asparagus harvesting had by 1965 come to economic naught;* the growing militancy of Filipino workers (who had long dominated asparagus work) and new competition in the global canned white asparagus market from Taiwan encouraged growers and processors to relocate to the Bajio region of central Mexico.[14]

In other crops the end of the bracero program conversely led to a rapid mechanization and thus further expansion and entrenchment in the California landscape. The paradigmatic case is canning tomatoes. As briefly noted in the previous chapter, machine harvesting was exceptionally rapidly adopted in the wake of the bracero program's demise. That such a rapid mechanization would occur was by no means a sure thing. Representative Gubser complained in 1965 that tomato-picking machines "produce . . . a rather muddy quality of fruit which is suitable for catsup, puree, and hot sauce. It will not produce the type of quality pack which we refer to as whole peel and solid pack tomatoes." Since, he argued, growers still had to have "quality" canning tomatoes hand-packed, they

* Part of the difficulty was the unevenness of asparagus spear growth rates. In the 1960s, focus shifted to breeding plants with uniform production rates; but by the 1990s, this had not led to the development of economical mechanical harvesters, despite the development of sophisticated fiber-optical sensing. See, for example, Dale E. Marshall, "Status of Mechanical Asparagus Harvesting," paper presented to the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, December 1994, updated 1996, 2001, available at http://web1.msue.msu.edu/vegetable/Resources/aspmech.htm (accessed October 7, 2010).

were likely to start looking to "move their entire operation to Mexico. The California Packing Corp., the Heinz Co., and Campbell's soup already have tomato processing plants in Mexico. The Tri-Valley Packing Corp. is negotiating; so are several others," especially since the price to canners of tomatoes was rising rapidly. "The abolition of public Law 78 is directly responsible for the increase in the raw material to the canner from $25 [per ton] to $35, or perhaps as high as $37. This, when translated into the finished product means about $1 per case," he argued. At the same time, Gubser noted, tomato acreage in California had fallen from 143,000 in 1964 to 116,000 in 1965, a 19 percent decline he attributed to banks' chariness at loaning to growers now unsure of how their crop was going to be harvested.*[15]

The nature of the tomato had long been central to efforts to mechanize its harvesting. Like asparagus, tomatoes do not ripen uniformly, hence the need for several "picks" (often paid at a different rate) during the harvest. Mechanized harvesting, attendees at the Farm Mechanization Symposium in 1965 learned, required a tomato plant that could be harvested in a single pass with no more than 20–25 percent waste; it required a tomato that "would come off the vine with some agitation [rather] than the force required to take it off by picking," while being able to "stand a little more abuse than the average tomato that was hand-picked." Engineers had to work closely with plant breeders as the latter determined for each breed "how much abuse" it would stand, "how much force . . . it take[s] to take it off by pulling, by twisting, by bending, by other means." They had to understand "the reaction of the vine to mechanical systems." Work at understanding these processes and breeding suitable plants had begun during World War II, but as breeders and engineers affiliated with the University of California's experimental stations sought to interest growers in the early 1950s, "we would have comments of encouragement, but no one assumed we would need a machine for the foreseeable future." But "in 1959 we were asked, because of the indications or implications that there might be some labor problems, we were asked to put a machine into the field" that would prove the "viability of mechanical harvesting." This request was backed by "a fairly large financial grant" from the Tomato Growers Association, "made to the University of California in a crash program type of arrangement to perfect the harvester that year." Intimations of the end of the bracero program spurred mechanization, even if plans for its development had begun long before.[16]

* Other data show that canning tomato acreage declined from 142,872 acres in 1964 to 122,732 acres in 1965, a 14 percent decline. Calculated from de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, table 6.1, 115, table 6.11, 140.

The Tomato Growers Association's Robert Holt responded to an assemblyman's question about whether flavor was sacrificed in the process of mechanization—"I understand that the flavor of them—has very little juice in them—about like a rubber ball," in essence, Representative Gubster's complaint about "muddiness"—that "we have some indications that some processors think it's great, and other processors think it's less good. . . . I don't think we have arrived yet at the ideal variety of tomato for mechanical harvesting." Among other problems, "we found this spring that the type of weather we had early this year caused the varieties to react strangely"; primarily the fruit did not appear as "concentrated sets," but rather it appeared "as two or three definite sets." That is, it did not set in such a way that uniform ripening would be likely. These problems were serious, as far as growers were concerned. Like Gubser, Holt reported that California canners were beginning to move into Mexico, and that U.S. processors were increasing their investments in Italy. If braceros were not replaced with another reliable labor source *and* mechanization did not proceed rapidly, Holt worried that California growers would face "a real threat . . . by import." Tomato production might go the way of white asparagus.[17]

Even though Ernie Blackwelder, the president of the Blackwelder Manufacturing Company—which held the rights to produce the mechanical tomato harvester developed by UC engineers—argued that the smaller labor force needed to tend to the harvesters (predictions were that 40% of the harvest labor demand would be eliminated; eventually with the development of optical sorters it would be even more) would be of a higher quality ("people will be riding on the machines, it won't be stoop labor"), in fact, machine-riding tomato sorters tended to be paid fifteen to twenty-five cents an hour less than skilled tomato pickers. Whatever the difficulties in perfecting both the technology and the plant, the tomato harvester clearly portended a revolution in the labor process, a revolution that allowed for the replacement of "cheap labor" with "cheap labor," only less of it. And it was of a different kind: about 80 percent of the workers employed as sorters on the machines were female; doing work qualitatively quite similar to that of sorters and packers in the sheds, they were paid considerably less "due to the lack of unionization and the absence of white or male workers." The shift in the tomato fields echoed the earlier shift in the lettuce fields.[18]

And like the monster lettuce harvester that preceded it, the tomato harvester also required a significant transformation of the growing landscape. Models developed in the 1960s required large-scale farming: minimum one-hundred-acre fields in order to work at full capacity (later two hundred acres), leveled fields, and the ability to rotate crops—tomatoes could only be planted every

other year. Moreover, "the machine was expensive, and adoption implied not only the harvester itself, but also investment in a package, which eventually included direct-seeders to insure uniformity in planting, power tillers, chemicals for weed control, bulk bin carriers, a machine to open up the fields for the carriers, and perhaps thinning machines." Adoption, in other words, favored further economic concentration in the growing landscape (the number of tomato farmers decreased 18% between 1964 and 1975, while average farm size increased 168% and total acreage increased 109%). The high capital costs also "reduced the farmer's flexibility to choose his crop mix, virtually forcing him to produce tomatoes, year after year." And "reduced flexibility meant greater vulnerability to changes in the market or weather conditions, and increased risk of farming." The "variable" costs of labor, therefore, became all the more important.[19]

One way tomato growers mediated the inflexibility induced by mechanization was to expand production of sugar beets, the crop that Octavio Rivas Guillen had come to pick back in September 1942, and about which Davis McEntire worried that wholesale Mexican National importation would merely delay needed rationalization. In fact, the sugar beet harvest was partially mechanized during the war, shifting peak labor demand to the spring planting and thinning season when labor demand was low in other crops. Little progress was made on rationalization or mechanization of planting and thinning during the bracero era, however, given the ready availability of both bracero and domestic workers (in 1958, braceros comprised 61% of the beet-thinning labor force; by 1963, that percentage had dropped to 49), and given that available technology tended to unacceptably lower yields. Much effort went into developing mechanical precision planters that some hoped would eliminate the need for thinning altogether.[20]

In 1962, the federal government lifted limits on sugar beet acreage. Tomato growers quickly expanded their planting (beet acreage increased by 50% in California), especially since the beets had many different uses—not only refining for sugar but as fodder for California's expanding feedlot operations. Sugar beets were "an 'ideal' crop for rotation with . . . crops that tended to exhaust the soil." Given the convergence of these factors, it seemed as if total mechanization of the beet crop might be imminent. It was not. In 1976, 40 percent of thinning and almost all the hoeing was still done by hand, as growers preferred employing the swelling ranks of undocumented workers to the capital costs associated with mechanical thinning. At the same time, students of California agriculture also recognized that if total mechanization did come, it would, other things being equal, further exacerbate the difference between "peak" and "trough" labor

demand in the state as thinning provided necessary work during what was the off-season for so many other crops.[21]

Other crops took different paths. Even before the bracero program ended, the lemon industry underwent restructuring as rising costs (including labor) and lowering market prices drove many producers out of business. Because of its fairly successful efforts to replace domestic workers with braceros at the end of the 1940s (by 1963, 70% of lemons were picked by braceros), lemon growers saw little more than disaster in the end of the bracero program. Already by 1965, Representative C. M. Teague could be heard complaining, "the quality of citrus in the market this year is not as good as it has been in the last years, quite largely due to the fact of an unreliable harvest." Lemons and other citrus fruit "have stayed on the trees, they have gotten too large, and were not the top quality fruit comparable to those which came in other years. That is attributable to the lack of labor." Though there was some experimentation with tree shakers for lemon harvesting as the bracero program came to an end, shakers produced too much damaged fruit. Growers associations therefore focused on rationalizing the labor process.[22]

Faced with perceived labor shortages during World War II, lemon growers worked with the University of California to develop a Taylorist "Tree Production Incentive Wage System" that set piece rates in relation to tree height and yield, assuring average hourly wages to workers of average efficiency. The rate of harvesting increased drastically, thereby lowering overall labor demand, even as individual workers found increased per hour wages. In the wake of the bracero program (and whatever C. M. Teague's worries), lemon grower associations sought to consolidate these productivity gains and to develop a trustworthy year-round labor force. During the bracero era (as we saw), growers rarely offered longer than the minimum six-week contract as a means of insuring against "jokers." Now they turned to PL 414 workers, who would be close to year-round employees and whose experience and skill could therefore be counted on. The incentive pay system was supplemented with a minimum wage offered to lemon workers during a two-month training period, after which they were expected to have developed enough skill to exceed that minimum wage when paid piece rate. If they did not, they were let go. Remarkably for California, growers associations implemented paid vacations, health insurance, and unemployment insurance for harvest workers. They also trained harvest workers in the highly skilled labor of pruning, further stretching out work for the best employees. A hydraulic picking platform was introduced to eliminate the need to constantly scale and descend ladders. This was a gradual process,

but the results nonetheless were quickly felt. Between 1966 and 1972, one association found the number of lemon pickers needed declined by more than half, even as the amount harvested did not change. Grower costs increased by less than 20 percent even though wages increased by more than 50 percent. Historians of this change argue that "the special nature of green card [PL 414] immigrants limited their use in California agriculture to those sectors that could employ high-wage labor rationalizations" because once in the United States green card workers were free to switch jobs—to move to the highest bidder. They were not indentured in the way braceros were. Because of the length of the season, the high value of the crop, and other factors, lemon growers were able to undertake the sort of rationalization that made green carders a viable, indeed desired, labor source. Growers of other crops were not, and instead turned to "the use of illegal immigrants (whose existence was dependent on State police) who were more appropriate to low-wage work" when mechanization or (as with asparagus) relocation were not viable options.[23]

The point is that the end of the bracero program ushered in a period of rapid restructuring in labor relations, labor processes, and the very nature of work. It is too simple to say that the sudden unavailability of braceros "caused" the mechanization of the tomato harvest (the history of mechanization in lettuce and cotton gives the lie to that contention; in these crops the existence of braceros helped ease the industries into mechanized harvests); but it is accurate to say that it forced a profound shift in how farmers understood the labor process and the potential of machines in the fields. The calculus on which they made their decisions—which had to include the growing militancy of domestic workers emboldened by the end of the program—shifted, and they had to respond. If in 1957, lemon growers were content to string their workers along on six-week contracts, each contract earned "the hard way," then a decade later such a practice was unavailing. With the loss of braceros new management techniques had to be invented. And they were.

The Persistence of the Landscape

The end of the bracero program ushered in restructured labor relations; it also ushered in a partial restructuring of the landscape. It hardly portended the end of exploitative labor relations in California—whatever the very real gains of the farm worker movement after the program's demise and with the rise of the UFW. But the loss of the "labor market insurance" braceros represented together with other pressures on farming (ranging from ongoing battles over water and

the steady encroachment of suburbanization to the dawn of a new era of environmentalism that threw into question long-standard practices of chemically based farming), growers found investment in the agribusiness landscape to be at some peril. A particular, *capitalistic* landscape of farming—the factories in the field McWilliams identified on the eve of World War II—had persisted in the postwar era in no small part because of the constant availability of braceros. The kind of rationalization of the landscape McWilliams had called for, if it was ever on the books, was certainly forestalled by growers' ability to nurture a bracero labor force—and a supine state necessary for its management.

The bracero era allowed agribusiness to cement its control, so that by the end of the program it was simply inconceivable that the industry could be restructured in any fundamental way. While growers would obviously have to continue experimenting and innovating, and while the pressure of militant farm workers would have to be faced head-on, there was no sense, either from the soon to be ex-Governor Pat Brown's administration or the insurgent Ronald Reagan gubernatorial administration, that the power of the growers to dictate how capital "flowed over the land" would be curtailed. The future was already apparent in 1965. In that year, "in terms of gross income from all sources, agriculture . . . made the largest contribution in history to the total economy of California," which itself had "reached all-time highs" with "the rate of growth accelerated as the year progressed," according to a report prepared for Governor Brown.[24]

Twenty-two years later—that is, a stretch of time equivalent to the duration of the bracero program—geographer James Parsons argued that "nothing has changed the structure of [San Joaquin] valley agriculture quite so much as mechanization." At the same time "the agricultural labor question is always the crucial one in the valley. The social system remains reminiscent of the plantation South with a class of ethnically distinct and socially inferior manual laborers that has proved to be generally impervious to union organization. . . . Wage rates are high in comparison with other parts of the country, but employment is limited for most persons to several summer months each year. Dependence on welfare and food stamps is high." Much the same argument could have been made—and was—in 1966, 1936, or 1916 instead of 1986. And it can still be made now. The early braceros were imported as a means of preserving a set of prerogatives and privileges California growers took to be both natural and necessary, as well as to protect and realize the perceived value stored in or made possible by the agricultural landscape. Braceros changed social relations, but they also preserved them. Post-bracero transformations of the labor process likewise

were geared toward preserving dominant relations rather than fundamentally restructuring them. There is no doubt the work of preservation was itself an enormous amount of work: the preceding pages attest to that.[25]

"Reality," Octavio Rivas Guillen wrote, "soon caught up with us." That reality was hardly unchanging or unchanged over the course of the bracero program, but it was a reality rooted in a struggle to maintain a particular form of industrial capitalist farming. What is most remarkable about the post-bracero landscape is how little changed, fundamentally, it was from the *pre*-bracero landscape. An epoch of labor relations—a time when labor relations operated on a markedly different basis than before or after—in fact marked an epoch of continuity more than change.

CONCLUSION

"They Saved the Crops"

Just about a year after the bracero program began, Carey McWilliams penned a propaganda piece extolling its virtues. Despite whatever private misgivings he may have harbored, he argued in the August 1943 pages of *The Inter-American* (a mouthpiece for Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy) that the program had been a "major stroke of good luck." It was good luck because it had been administered by the FSA, "an agency capable of handling mass importation on a planned, intelligent, and scientific basis." It is hard, now, not to read this piece as delusional given that it was published four solid months after Congress handed control of the program to the WFA (a fact McWilliams noted) and protections for domestic workers had been swept aside by the Pace Amendment. Hardly delusional—indeed quite prescient—however, was the title of the *Inter-American* piece: "They saved the crops."[1]

They saved more than the crops. They saved the system in all its iniquitous glory. Six months after McWilliams's *Inter-American* article appeared, FSA labor specialist Edward Rowell noted that no real labor shortage had ever existed in California and that "it may be one of the major agricultural tragedies of the post-war world, that an emergency [labor shortage] did not develop since the bankruptcy of current patterns was thus avoided." It was not as if this bankruptcy was hard to see. Commission after commission, report after report, scandal after scandal continuously brought it to light throughout the bracero era. Rather, as we have abundantly witnessed, though procuring and deploying them was frequently a struggle, and though nothing ever seemed guaranteed in California farming (from the perspective of growers, at least), braceros were a primary means by which confronting the social (if rarely economic) bankruptcy of California agribusiness was avoided. Braceros were essential to deeply cementing into place what McWilliams as well as Rowell called "the pattern."[2]

Struggle in the fields and camps often revolved around just how that pattern was to be seen and interpreted—around what kind of "morphological eye" was to prevail: one focused on the needs, desires, and physical, bodily survival of the people working in the fields, or one focused on the needs, desires, and expansion of the capital that might (or might not) accumulate in the hands of Cali-

fornia growers. For the latter "bankruptcy" was always a looming threat, one made all the more likely if enough complacent, inexpensive, and flexible labor power was not readily to hand. The labor market insurance braceros provided was invaluable, and the landscape had to be reshaped to assure that the insurance was actually effective: not just a paper certificate, but a real and operational policy. For the former the social (and bodily) bankruptcy of the program and the landscape made in its image had every day to be challenged, both in the camps and fields themselves and in the halls of Congress and the bureaucrats' offices in Sacramento and San Francisco. Their struggles, focused often on immediate needs and the exigencies of the current fight, had to be placed within a context of what the agricultural landscape *could be* if the bracero program could be eliminated once and for all. These opposing views of the landscape shaped the struggles and therefore shaped and reshaped the landscape itself.

During the bracero era, they reshaped the landscape into an ever-new, ever-same morphology that looked remarkably like the pre-FSA landscape of the 1930s, only *more so*. For growers, a productive, living landscape required that workers become more and more mere vessels of labor power, more nearly the factors of production capitalist economics declares they are, and thereby less and less living, breathing people. For workers the struggle was always against just this process—a struggle to carve out a space to live, whatever the daily horrors (or, in fact, just the boredom) of everyday life as a bracero, a "wetback," or a demonized domestic worker. McWilliams titles a section of one his books, a section on the DiGiorgio strike in the late 1940s, "The Plot Never Changes." Perhaps it doesn't. "Headlines from the valley newspapers tell the story," McWilliams writes:

> "Farm Work Sought for 5,000 Without Jobs"; "Needy Migrants Create Relief Problem"; "Polio, Diarrhea Cases Increase in Kern County"; "Children Living in Labor Camps Are Called 'Lost'"; "Relief Agencies Foresee New Wholesale Want in West Side Labor Camps"; "Kern Crime is Blamed on Farm Worker Poverty"; "Officials Will Tackle Farm Hunger Problem"; "Labor Camp Rent Shows Increase of 50 Per Cent"; "Labor Camps in Valley Found in Poor Condition."

These headlines are all from the *Fresno Bee* in 1948 and 1949, but, as McWilliams pointed out, on August 29, 1948, the *Bee* printed a "Fifty Years Ago" column reprinting essentially the same stories from 1898. It would not be hard to find them in 1998 either. Indeed, that very year, the California Research Bureau of the California State Library sponsored a report that showed, among other things, the "non-compliance rates" for field sanitation ranged from 55 to 65 percent between 1992 and 1997; that more than 250,000 farm workers and

their families lived in substandard housing (even as growers rapidly abandoned providing any housing facilities at all); that the majority of workers who lived in non-government-sponsored camps lived in "seriously substandard conditions"; that "farmworkers suffer a higher incidence of malnutrition than any other subpopulation in the country"; that measles killed 33 children of farm workers in 1989–90; that in 1994 the average hourly farm wage was $6.36 (the equivalent of $1.29 in 1964, 74¢ in 1951; and 39¢ in 1942); and that Fresno and Kern counties had the highest infant death rates in the state (though they had dropped to 10/1,000 and 9.4/1,000, respectively).[3]

Perhaps the plot doesn't ever really change, but, as the foregoing pages have made clear, *that* it won't change is not guaranteed. Persistence must be produced; it must be fought for. McWilliams could see the kind of change that ought to be fought for in the California fields as the United States entered World War II, but so too could growers like C. C. Teague or Joseph DiGiorgio see just as clearly what they stood to lose and therefore what they had to protect. Twenty-two years later, the plot had little changed, but as growers lost access to their controlled, indentured braceros, it seemed like it was about to. And, as the push to mechanize tomatoes and the abandonment of white asparagus, among any number of other examples showed, the landscape—the agricultural plot (in that other sense of the word)—did indeed change, at least some. Why, by 1998 it had not really changed for workers, despite the impressive wins in the fields by the UFW that the end of the bracero program helped make possible, is a complex story. But one thing is clear: to the degree that labor relations, labor processes, and labor lives did *not* change, it was because clearly landscape is, always, no matter what, power materialized. The very conditions of possibility in agricultural California have to be continually produced and reproduced, fought for, struggled over, *materialized*.

Ernesto Galarza knew this. Calling the "bracero system" a "cover-up of agri-business in partnership with government, or more accurately, of government as the junior partner of agri-business," he ended his 1977 exposé by declaring: "The promises of the American spirit were (1) freedom, the equal chance to choose among the many possible options to live a creative life; (2) liberty, the effective and accomplished pursuit of these choices; (3) democracy, the opportunity to live in a society in which freedom and liberty can be enjoyed by all; and (4) community, the ultimate commitment to maintaining those social settlements in which persons of whatever condition can effectively preserve and defend freedom, liberty, and democracy. These, too were denied to the farm workers of California. To achieve them the struggle goes on." The struggles go on because, as Galarza explained at the outset of this exposé, "Wherever and

in whatever form the harvester showed signs of putting down roots, shallow as they might be, they were condemned to destabilization forthwith." The bracero program was, across its history, and precisely because of all the other things it was (labor market insurance, a means of holding down wages, a rapid-strike "task force," a reasonably sure supply of strikebreakers), a primary means of destabilization.[4]

A force for destabilization of working people, the bracero program was also a force for the stabilization of the profitable landscape: *it* saved the crops—precisely *because* it destroyed lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This production has been made possible by a cast of thousands. I would like to acknowledge a few of its members and I hope those I miss will forgive the oversight.

A small grant from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University launched the project. I appreciate the support of Christina Leigh Dietz and Mike Wasylenko. With the grant I hired Patrick Vitale, who did a fabulous job tracking down and briefing me on available archival collections and helping me see which ones might be the most fruitful for examining the bracero program not in and of itself but within the changing California landscape. Patrick's work, I am sure, made a proposal to the National Science Foundation convincing enough for the Geography and Spatial Science to award me a grant (BCS 0550585). Without the Foundation's support, I could not have done the depth of archival research I knew this project required. NSF's support, of course, in no way implies that it accepts my views or interpretations; I alone am responsible for them.

As is their wont, the librarians, archivists, and other staff who helped me find the documents on which this study is based were extremely generous with their time, while being exceptionally nice to a peripatetic and lonely researcher. Special thanks to all those I encountered in the Special Collections Department of Green Library, Stanford University; the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego; and perhaps most of all the California State Archives. The interlibrary loan department in Bird Library at Syracuse University was unfailingly efficient and helpful; they nearly made it seem as if I were in California (despite the piles of snow under which Syracuse habitually lives).

In amassing and organizing what now amounts to my own rather large library of documents relating to the bracero program I had excellent help (and excellent intellectual companionship) from a large number of students. Bora Kim trolled the agricultural censuses for me and figured out how to both summarize them and format them in a database that made my own analyses a breeze. Lisa Bhungalia tracked down and copied a mountain of fugitive documents and reports. Katie Wells ferreted out and collated for me an amazing trove of photographs. Josh Gray scanned the contemporary press for echoes of the bracero program in current immigration debates. Jacob Shell searched way-

back issues of various journals. Jen Jeffery compiled the bibliography. Thank you all!

In January 2008, at the invitation of the incomparable Barbie Zelizer, I moved to Philadelphia for a semester to join her Annenberg Scholars Program in Culture and Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. I was there to teach and research issues in urban public space, but the rich scholarly atmosphere and the provision of an office in a hidden corner of the building meant I could both get the intellectual juices flowing after an interminable term as department chair in Syracuse, and hunker down and start working through the documents I had amassed over the previous two years of sometimes much-too-rushed collecting. Fellow visiting scholar John Erni became a buddy, program administrators Anjali Gallup-Diaz and Emily Plowman made me feel more than at home, and a whole raft of colleagues and students—working in a field not my own—made me rethink more assumptions than I could list. The Annenberg School is lucky to have Dean Michael Delli Carpini running the show. Barbie herself made the whole experience an intellectual and social delight. Thank you for the opportunity.

A year later, back in Syracuse, a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship allowed me a semester and summer to pound out an early draft of about three-quarters of the manuscript. I very much appreciate the confidence the Foundation (and its reviewers) placed in my work. I hope they like the result. Mike Wasylenko once again figured out how to make the fellowship work within the context of both the Maxwell School and tax law.

Matt Garcia was one of those who wrote a letter of recommendation to the Foundation on my behalf, an act of generosity that I much appreciate and made more valuable by his general support of my work, and his good ideas for making it better. Expensive as they were, the drinks among "my people" at the Langham only make a dent in what I owe him. Dick Walker also wrote for me. My—all of our—debt to him in all things California ought to be clear from the pages that precede this. Same with Ruthie Gilmore; now that she is a fellow New Yorker, I am glad it will be easier to hang out and learn from such a fabulous comrade. From the earliest days, Sallie Marston has been in my corner, supporting me and correcting me, as needed. She did it again for the Guggenheim. There are no words to express what I owe Neil Smith.

The vast bulk of the writing and rewriting was done in the poorly heated, un-air-conditioned three-season porch that serves as my study. So I would be remiss if I did not thank the anonymous workers who sewed my wooly slippers and soon-to-be-sweat-stained T-shirts. Same goes for all those other workers

whom we never seem to remember but who make our work possible, from the computer assemblers to mail deliverers, and from the city sewage workers to the untold hundreds of thousands of farm workers who have made the reproduction of my own labor power possible. Workers: it is time to take back what is rightfully ours, no matter how much it might cost more comfortable folk like me. KCSM, the Bay Area's Jazz Station, was my steady companion: the DJs there—workers of a different sort—are brilliant.

When I ventured out of the cold (or heat) and into the Syracuse Department of Geography (or more likely Metro, Alto Cinco, or Phoebe's), it was to hang out with a gang of supportive, stimulating students and colleagues. Besides those already named, the following friends and comrades have made and make the department a wonderfully stimulating, intellectual, and political place to be: Clayton Rosati, Reecia Orzeck, Laam Hae, Bob Ross, Carrie Breitbach, Joaquin Villanueva, Kafui Attoh, Ben Gerlofs, Jonnell Allen Robinson, Tod Rutherford, Tom Perreault, Matt Huber, Bob Wilson, Jane Read, Jamie Winders, Mark Monmonier, Anne Mosher, John Western, Jake Bendix, Peng Gao, and the much missed Elizabeth Wallace, librarian *extraordinaire*. Conversations with Jenna Loyd about structural violence have been a boon. Joe Stoll drew the fabulous maps and diagrams—and fast! Just outside our doors, I continue to benefit from my friendships with Robert Rubinstein and Deborah Pellow, and from Bill Horrace and the SoHo Trio's playing. Here's to hoping we all survive the current Maxwell regime.

The long, lonely work of writing was broken up by presentations of portions of my work as the F. Ross Johnson-Connaught Distinguished Speaker, Centre for the Study of the United States, University of Toronto; the Hausser Lecturer, Department of History and Philosophy, Montana State University; the E. Willard Miller Lecturer in the Department of Geography, Penn State University; and the *Antipode* Lecturer at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geography; and in colloquia in the departments of Landscape Architecture and Geography, University of Illinois; the Baldy Center on Law and Society, University at Buffalo; and in the departments of Geography at the University Frankfurt, Kansas State University, University of Minnesota, University of North Carolina, Stockholm University, Queens University, and Syracuse University. I am grateful to the organizers for the opportunity and to the audiences for the questions and criticism. Several articles were written simultaneously with this book, and shamelessly cannibalized for it. I am grateful to the editors—Graeme Wynne, Scott Kirsch, Colin Flint, Wendy Larner, and Rachel Slocum—and their reviewers for their incisive comments, which

undoubtedly improved this book too, and to the publishers for permission to reuse that work here. It was a special joy contributing to Scott and Colin's book.

More directly, Matt Hannah, Geoff Mann, and Matt Huber read and commented on a draft of the whole damn manuscript. Their care, sympathy, and critical eyes were almost too good to be true. (An anonymous reviewer also had some sharp things to say.) Too often I did not follow their advice in filling in gaps in my knowledge and holes in the narrative (the book is long enough!): but rest assured Geoff and the two Matt H's, your tough questions and keen insights live on as I continue to wrestle with the meaning of the bracero program, both in its historical moment and now.

Matt Garcia organized a fantastic conference, "Guest Workers: Western Origins, Global Futures," at the Huntington Library, held just before I sent the manuscript to the press. In addition to the exciting scholarly work I was exposed to, and in addition to the vital discussions of politics and struggle they led to, fellow presenters showed me where I needed to make crucial revisions of fact and interpretation. Thanks, Roy Ritchie and the Huntington, for making the conference possible. Remnants of money used to establish the People's Geography Project allowed a last-minute photo safari in the Galarza Papers at Stanford, so thanks, one more time, to the MacArthur Foundation for making the PGP possible. Richard Steven Street provided timely and generous advice as I searched out appropriate photographs—and their owners.

At the University of Georgia, Nik Heynen—comrade-in-arms—championed my book to Derek Krissoff and the Press. He intervened at crucial moments when I got my back up, and helped get it back down again. Thanks. Derek, of course, needed no championing to: I have valued his support and faith in my work, and his advice from the moment we first met at Nik's brilliant Summer Institute for the Geographies of Justice. A special thank-you to copyeditor Maria denBoer, and to Beth Sneed, Jon Davies, and John McLeod at the Press.

Lynn Staeheli remains a steadfast friend and collaborator. She has generously allowed this work often to take precedence over our joint work. Also, she makes sure I do not get too big for my britches.

Even better at that is Susan Millar. She's been living with my obsession with the California landscape and migrant workers longer than anyone, mostly good-naturedly. She put up with my long absences while I hunkered down in the archives, as well as my obsessive work out on the porch (even more, she convinced me that if I cleaned it, I just might find the things I needed to finish the book, at last). She's always there when I do pull my head out of postwar Cali-

fornia (unless she is at the gym) and I continue to count myself lucky to be able to share life with her.

Portions of previously published material have been revised and represented here by permission of the editors and publishers:

Don Mitchell, "Labor's Geography: Capital, Violence, Guest Workers and the Post World War II Landscape," *Antipode* 43 (2011): 563–95.

Don Mitchell, "Battle/Fields: Braceros, Agribusiness, and the Violent Reproduction of the California Agricultural Landscape during World War II," *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010): 143–56.

Don Mitchell, "War as Emergency?: Constructing and Deconstructing the California Agricultural Landscape," in *Reconstructing Conflict: Integrating War and Post-War Geographies*, ed. J. Kirsch and C. Flint (London: Ashgate, 2011), 273–94.

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ARCHIVES CONSULTED

Endnote Notation	*Source*
Calisphere	http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/
DIR Records	Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Immigration and Housing Records, BANC MSS C-A 194, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
Division of Housing Records	Division of Housing, Department of Industrial Relations Records, F3743, California State Archives, Sacramento
Douglas Collection	Helen Gahagan Douglas Collection, Carl Albert Congressional Research Studies Center Congressional Archives, University of Oklahoma, Norman
Draper Collection	Anne Draper Papers, M0228, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California
Galarza Papers	Ernesto Galarza Papers, M0224, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California
Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV	Governor's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley Records, F3845, California State Archives, Sacramento
Hawkins Papers	Augustus Hawkins Papers, Department of Special Collections, UCLA (accessed through Calisphere)
Hollenberg Papers	Ralph Hollenberg Papers, Materials Relating to the Farm Security Administration, Region IX, San Francisco, Calif., BANC MSS C-R 1, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
Knight Papers, Series 42	Goodwin J. Knight Papers, C114, Series 42, Department of Employment Files—Farm Labor Placements, 1953–1958, California State Archives, Sacramento
Knight Papers, Series 92	Goodwin J. Knight Papers, C114, Series 92, Department of Industrial Relations Files—Division of Housing, 1953–1958, California State Archives, Sacramento
NARA online	National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 174, General Records of the Department of Labor, 1907–2001, accessed through http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/

Salandini Papers	Victor Salandini Papers, M0429, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California
Taylor Papers	Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, BANC MSS 84/38c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (Note: The Taylor Papers were reorganized within the last decade and are now found under this designation. Some research in this collection was done in 1991, when there were two different Taylor collections; no records were maintained, apparently, as to how these collections were combined, nor how file names were changed. I have thus retained the old designations—C-B 893 and C-R 3—as appropriate when documents from this earlier research trip are cited.)
Teague Papers	Charles Collins Teague Papers, BANC MSS C-B 760, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
Vizzard Papers	James L. Vizzard Papers, M0324, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California
Warren Papers, DIR/DIH	Earl Warren Papers, F3640, Administrative Files, Industrial Relations, Immigration and Housing, California State Archives, Sacramento
Warren Papers, Employment	Earl Warren Papers, F3640, Administrative Files, Department of Employment, California State Archives, Sacramento
Warren Papers, Farm Labor	Earl Warren Papers, F3640, Department of Agriculture—Farm Labor, California State Archives, Sacramento
Warren Papers, FPC	Earl Warren Papers, F3640, Department of Agriculture, Farm Production Council, California State Archives, Sacramento
I. W. Wood Papers	Irving W. Wood Papers, BANC MSS 77/111c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
Yellen Papers	Ben Yellen Papers, MSS 0193, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Octavio Rivas Guillen, "Mexican Worker Describes Treatment Received in California," typescript, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3; Anne Roller Issler, "Good Neighbors Lend a Hand: Our Mexican Workers," *Survey Graphic*, October 1943, 389–94, quotation from 392.

2. As will be obvious, I have relied particularly heavily on Calavita, *Inside the State*; Craig, *Bracero Program*; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*; and Scruggs, *Braceros, "Wetbacks," and the Farm Labor Problem*. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) produced a very useful official history of the early years of the program: Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*. The first months of the program, together with key documents relating to its implementation and governance, were compiled by the FSA in "Consolidated Progress Report of the Mexican Farm Labor Transportation Program of the Farm Security Administration, through November 20, 1942," available online through the University of California's Calisphere, http://content.cdlib.org/xtf/view?docId=hb9j49p4n9&brand=calisphere&doc.view=entire_text (accessed January 13, 2009).

3. Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision*, chap. 5.

4. Don Mitchell, "Landscape." See also Meinig, *Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*; W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*; Olwig, "Recovering the Substantive Nature."

5. Ollman, *Dialectical Investigations*.

6. The best overview of California agriculture as a whole is Walker, *Conquest of Bread*. On the nature of the labor market during the bracero program and the growers' desire above all for flexibility within a context of predictability, see Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*. See Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*; Fuller, *Hired Hands in California's Fields*, part 2; California Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, parts 1 and 2. In *Braceros*, Deborah Cohen provides an in-depth analysis of the motivations of many *aspirantes* who sought work as braceros, arguing that the program was designed to instill a certain kind of "modernism" in its worker subjects (to match the modernization of the California landscape I discuss); her book was published too late for me to fully incorporate its insights into what follows, though I have tried to cite it where appropriate.

7. Preston, *Vanishing Landscapes*, 214, 243. For an excellent account of the consolidation of corporate cotton farming in the Tulare Basin, complete with all the violence, underhand deals, and massive landscape transformations that entailed, see Arax and Wartzman, *King of California*.

8. Ollman, *Dialectical Investigations*, 12; Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*; Preston, *Vanishing Landscapes*, 229.

9. Untitled, undated report, attached to memo, Rutledge to Hewes, "Beet Field Labor Difficulties in the Salinas Valley," Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3; Don Mitchell, "Battle/Fields."

10. Rutledge to Hewes, "Beet Field Labor Difficulties in the Salinas Valley," Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3. Matt Garcia reports a similar strike in the Southern California citrus orchards in 1943: *World of Its Own*, 177.

11. Warren to Hackendorf, April 7, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 725; Koetitz to Parker, November 29, 1943, Warren Papers, Department of Industrial Relations DIR/DIH, File 2291; California Farm Production Council, *Report of Activities, July 1, 1943 to December 31, 1944*, 5, 12, 15–16, Warren Papers, FPC, File 31.

12. Quoted in Jaime Vélez Storey, "The Braceros," in Mraz and Storey, *Uprooted*, 31–53, quotations from 31, 32.

13. FSA "Importation of Agricultural Laborers," Hollenberg Papers, Bancroft Library, Box 5, Folder 33, p. 3; Gregory Silvermaster, "The Farm Labor Situation in 1942 and its Relation to FSA," paper read at the Administrator's Staff Conference, Cincinnati, November 26, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 3, File 23; Mills to McWilliams, January 17, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 1; Mills to Silvermaster, April 27, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 2. See also McEntire to Provinse, April 13, 1942; Farm Security Administration Miscellaneous Documents and Reports, available online through Calisphere at http://content.cdlib.org/xtf/view?docId=hb9j49p4n9&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00190&toc.depth=1&toc.id=div00190&brand=calisphere&query=provinse (accessed January 20, 2009).

14. State Rural Resettlement, California Division of the Resettlement Administration, "Statement in Support of Project to Establish Camps for Migrants in California," August 22, 1935, p. a, I. W. Wood Papers, quoted in Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 176; Starr, *Endangered Dreams*, 63.

15. Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, "Background and Purpose of the Committee," n.d., 2; Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 1; table 9, "Indexes of Seasonal Variation in Labor Requirements," in Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 22; Becker to Committee to Survey Agricultural Labor Resources, August 1, 1950, abstracted by Committee, p. 1; Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 7a.

16. Jelinek, *Harvest Empires*, 67; Governor's Committee, *Agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley*, 111, 113.

17. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 8.

18. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 1; Sposito is quoted in Johnson, Haslam, and Dawson, *Great Central Valley*, 6; Stoll, *Fruits of Natural Advantage*, xiv.

19. McWilliams, *California*, 104; Parsons, "A Geographer Looks at the San Joaquin Valley," 371.

20. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 49, 51; Henderson, *California*.

CHAPTER 1 *The Agribusiness Landscape in the "War Emergency"*

Epigraphs are from Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 55; and Hollenberg Papers, Carton 5, File 33.

1. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 48, 49, 64–65. The literature on race and class struggles in California fields is extensive. The foundational source in labor history remains Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*; an excellent review of the literature is Douglas Sackman's "Bibliographic Essay" at the end of the 1999 University of California Press reprint of *Factories in the Field* (335–42). I examined the relation between labor, capital, and the state in making the California landscape during the first four decades of the twentieth century in *Lie of the Land*. The transition to more intensive farming has been well studied. Besides Walker's *Conquest of Bread*, see Henderson, *California*, 4–11; Rhode, "Learning"; Stoll, *Fruits of Natural Advantage*. An important study of the changing structure of landholdings in relation to both the making of the "bonanza farms" of the wheat era, and the more intensive farms of the specialty crop era, is Liebman, *California Farmland*. In his inimitable style, Starr traces some of the cultural effects of this transition in *Inventing the Dream*. On the role of cheap vis-à-vis flexible labor in structuring the California agricultural landscape, see Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*. A thorough examination of the problem of "cheap labor" was undertaken by Fuller in "Supply of Agricultural Labor."

2. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 205. On the CFBF and Associated Farmers, see Chambers, *California Farm Organizations*; Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation." On the formation of the cooperatives, see Sackman, *Orange Empire*, esp. chap. 3; see also the self-published memoir by bracero program protagonist Teague, *Fifty Years a Rancher*. Stoll's account in *Fruits of Natural Advantage* of the push toward horizontal and vertical integration is excellent if altogether too sanguine.

3. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 280; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 283, 325.

4. All data from the U.S. agricultural censuses for the appropriate years; quotations from Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 71–72, table III. These arguments are put in fuller historical context, leading up to the present, by the analysis Walker makes of California farm income and profit, *Conquest of Bread*, 83–86.

5. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, chap. 4.

6. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 324; Henderson unravels the ideology and economic logic of racist theories of fitness in relation to agriculture in *California and the Fictions of Capital*, 90–96; see also Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, chap. 4. On the construction and lasting practices of racism in California generally, see Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*.

7. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 325, 300.

8. The best studies of the Associated Farmers remain the extensive records of hearings and reports of the LaFollette Committee. United States Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, Hearings on S. Res. 266, *Violations of Free Speech and the Rights of Labor* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1936–10), 75 parts; and *Violations of Free Speech and the Rights of Labor, Report of the Committee on*

Education and Labor, Pursuant to S. Res. 266, Report 1150, 77th Congress (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1942), and Report 398, 78th Congress (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944). The Agricultural Pest No. 1 label shows up in a number of places; one is "Pest No. 1 Label on M'Williams—Official Accused of Inciting Radical Outbreaks," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 9, 1939, in LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 61, Exhibit 9516, 22353–54.

9. Scruggs, "Evolution," 140–49; Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 200. On the nature of the "labor shortage" in California—namely, that it did not exist in absolute terms and was highly localized in relative terms—see McEntire to Provinse, available online through the University of California's Calisphere, http://content.cdlib.org/xtf/view?docId=hb9j49p4n9&brand=calisphere&doc.view=entire_text (accessed January 13, 2009) (hereafter Calisphere), also available as "Importation of Agricultural Laborers from Mexico," Hollenberg Papers, Carton 5, File 33.

10. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 21; press release, governor's office, September 15, 1941, Taylor Papers, Carton 39, File 13; McEntire to Provinse, April 13, 1942, Calisphere; undated, untitled report, penciled "March 1942"; and Mills to Miller, April 29, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 1.

11. Bureau of Economics, "Preview of 1942 Production Situation: Summary of Results of a Survey Made by the Bureau in March, 1942," cited in Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 21; Scruggs, "Evolution of the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement," 141.

12. McEntire to Provinse, April 13, 1942, Calisphere; Geoff Mann, *Our Daily Bread*, lays out a convincing argument about the dialectics of race in the social production of "skill."

13. McEntire to Provinse, April 13, 1942, Calisphere.

14. Scruggs, "Evolution of the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement," 142–45; the full INS plan is available in FSA, "Consolidated Progress Report of the Mexican Farm Labor Transportation Program of the Farm Security Administration, Through November 20, 1942," Calisphere.

15. Carey McWilliams, "Proposal in Re Farm Labor Authority," June 11, 1942, Taylor Papers, Carton 42, File 15. On the same date as this proposal, McWilliams made a speech in Los Angeles—published in Mexico—outlining the nature of the demand for Mexican workers by California agribusiness, in which he seemed to ratify the growers' claim of a labor shortage in California: Jaime Vélez Storey, "The Braceros," in Mraz and Storey, *Uprooted*, 31–50, citation from 34.

16. McWilliams, "Proposal in Re Farm Labor Authority."

17. USDA, "USDA Sets Up Machinery for Moving Domestic Farm Labor," August 20, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3.

18. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 299; Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 201–5; Scruggs, "Evolution of the Farm Labor Agreement," 147; Messersmith to Wickard, July 22, 1942, Calisphere; copies of the diplomatic notes are also available in Calisphere.

19. USDA, "USDA Sets Forth FSA's Part in Importation of Mexican Workers," August 27, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3; Calavita, *Inside the State*, 20–21.

20. Storey, "Braceros," 38; Mraz and Storey, *Uprooted*, plate 79; USDA FSA, "How the Mexican Workers are Selected," November 3, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3; Jones, *Mexican War Workers*, 6–8 (published in Spanish as *Los Braceros Mexicanos en los Estados Unidos durante el Período Bélico: El Programa Mexicano-Estadounidense de Prestación de Mano do Obra* [1946]). One early bracero recalls getting sprayed with insecticide in 1942: see the oral history of early bracero Jésus Ortiz in Jacobo, *Los Braceros*, 35. But Storey says that the regular spraying of insecticide did not begin until 1944: "Braceros," 39.

21. Secretary of agriculture to Senator Hayden, September 1, 1942, as quoted in Scruggs, *Braceros*, 189.

22. USDA, "USDA Sets up Machinery for Moving Domestic Farm Labor," August 20, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3.

23. N. Gregory Silvermaster, "The Farm Labor Situation in 1942 and its Relation to FSA," paper read at the FSA Administrator's Staff Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio, November 26, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 3, File 23; "L. I. Hewes Jr. Replies to Criticisms of Mexican Labor Program," November 3, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3.

24. "L. I. Hewes Jr. Replies"; Albee to Douglas, September 5, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 1; "Has the White Man Lost His Hinge?" *Pacific Rural Press*, October 3, 1942, typescript copy, Taylor Papers, Carton 39, File 22.

25. Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation," 23, 249n10; CFBF press release, early December 1942, Teague Papers, Box 58, Folder E.

26. Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, 202; Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation," 102; for another example of California farmers' rejection of federal and state attempts to reform labor practices, see Associated Farmers, "The Outline of Suggestions for a Proposed Labor Supply Program for California Agriculture," approved December 1, 1942, and attached to Strathman to Sir, March 2, 1943, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 711.

27. Mills to Warren, January 23, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 724; Fuller, "Supply of Agricultural Labor"; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, chap. 5.

28. Coalson, "Mexican Contract Labor," 231; McDaniel to FSA, March 4, 1943, Teague Papers, Box 58, Folder B; Teague to Warren, March 30, 1943, Teague Papers, Box 58, Folder D; Doherty to Bixby, Warren Papers, FPC, File 726; Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 42–43; Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation," 232–34; Scruggs, "Bracero Program," 156, 158; Rutledge to Rowell, February 3, 1943; Rowell to Cohen, n.d.; Hewes to Lannan, February 13, 1942, all in Hollenberg Records, Carton 4, File 3; Schwartz to Silvermaster, March 19, 1943, and April 2, 1943, cited in Scruggs, *Braceros*, 204. Pay disputes were perhaps the most common complaint among braceros in the first months of the program. See Peralta C. to foreign editor, *Baltimore Sun*, December 4, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 1.

29. Cohen to Soule, November 6, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 1; Rutledge to Rowell, February 3, 1942, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 3. On the history of union busting and vigilantism in the Imperial, see Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 240–49; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 157–64; LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 55, Exhibits 8915–8918, 20298–312. For an excellent analysis of the political economy of Imperial Valley agriculture, see Andrés, "Power and Control."

30. Newspaper comments quoted in Routledge to Rowell, February 3, 1943; on growers' interpretation of their rights over labor, see, for example, the Hutchison Reports produced in the wake of the 1934 worker unrest in Imperial Valley, "The Imperial Valley Farm Labor Situation," LaFollette Committee Hearings, Part 54, Exhibit 8767–A, 20053–63; and "Supplement to the Report Entitled 'The Imperial Farm Labor Situation,'" LaFollette Committee Hearings, Part 54, Exhibit 8767–B, 20065–68.

31. Ray Wiser, California Farm Bureau Federation, "California Farm Labor Situation, as of January 1, 1943," transmitted Wiser to Warren, January 2, 1943; Associated Farmers, "The Outline of Suggestions for a Proposed Labor Supply Program for California Agriculture," transmitted with Strathman to Sir, March 2, 1943, both in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 711; Wiser to Hatfield and others, February 19, 1943; WTS to Warren, February 25, 1943, both in Warren Papers, FPC, File 724.

32. Warren to Teague, March 13, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 24; Teague Papers, Box 58, File D; "Address by Charles C. Teague at the State-wide Meeting of the California State Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry" (1942), Teague Papers, Box 58, File B; Teague to Fran, March 27, 1943, Teague Papers, Box 58, Folder A; Teague, "Memorandum on the Agricultural Labor Situation in California," n.d.; Teague to Wickard, March 22, 1943, both in Teague Papers, Box 58, File B; Thomas Robertson, "Plan for Importation of Agricultural Labor from Mexico to California"; Teague to Warren, March 30, 1943, both in Teague Papers, Box 58, File D; Teague to Warren, March 24, 1943; Teague to Wiser, March 24, 1943, both in Warren Papers, FPC, File 725; Doherty to Bixby, March 19, 1943; Teague to Warren, April 1, 1943, both in Warren Papers, FPC, File 726.

33. Telegram, Wiser to Teague, March 23, 1943; Teague to Wiser, March 24, 1943, both in Warren Papers, FPC, File 725; Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 42–46; Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation," 234.

34. Teague to Wiser, March 24, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 725; Teague to Warren, March 30, 1943, Teague Papers, Box 58, File D; Teague to Warren, April 1, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 726.

35. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 23.

36. PL 45 quoted in Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 46; see also 56–72.

37. Teague to Robertson, May 11, 1943, Teague Papers, Box 58, Folder D.

38. Ibid.

39. McWilliams quoted in Calavita, *Inside the State*, 21; Warren to Hatfield, March 24, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 725; W. B. Parker, "California Production Council at Midpoint," September 1, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 728.

40. Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation," 235–36; Warren to Hatfield, March 24, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 725; *Report of the Activities of the California Farm Production Council, July 1 to December 31, 1944* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1945), 3, Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 23; draft in Warren Papers, FPC, File 731.

41. *Report of the Activities*; California Farm Production Council, minutes of meeting, November 9 and 10, 1944, Warren Papers, FPC, File 731. See also Kieffer (business manager, *Pacific Rural Press*) to Warren, February 9, 1944, Warren Papers, FPC, File 729, which describes the FPC efforts to extend the bracero program to the woods where trees were harvested for fruit packing crates and pulp for newspaper.

42. Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation," 238.

MORPHOLOGY

1. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape," 11.

2. Sauer, "Morphology of Landscape," 322; Henderson, *California*; see also Harvey, *Limits to Capital*, chap. 8.

3. Marx, *Capital*, 537.

4. Harvey, *Limits to Capital*, 233. Henry George, quoted in McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*; Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, both quoted in Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 60, 19.

5. Harvey, *Limits to Capital*; Henderson, *California*, chap. 2; Mann and Dickenson, "Obstacles"; Susan Mann, *Agrarian Capitalism*; Fuller, "Supply of Agricultural Labor."

6. Marx, *Capital*.

CHAPTER 2 *The Struggle for a Rational Farming Landscape*

The epigraph is from Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 8.

1. Press release, April 7, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 726; *Report of the Activities of the California Farm Production Council, July 1, 1943 to December 31, 1944* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1945), Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 23 (hereafter *Report of Activities* I), 3; *Modesto Bee*, January 4, 1944, 8.

2. The first loss figure is from *Report of Activities* I, 3; the second is what Charles Teague claims the state director of agriculture reported: Teague to Warren, March 30, 1942, Warren Papers, FPC, File 726. "1942 Harvest Tops Record by 12%," *Fresno Bee*, December 12, 1942; "Growers Reap Huge Return for Vegetable Crop," *Fresno Bee*, January 2, 1943, both in Hollenberg Papers, Carton 6, File 55; Frank M. Shay, *Report of the Activities of the Farm Production Council, July 1, 1943 to March 1, 1947* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1947), 5 (hereafter *Report of Activities* II); *Report of Activities* I, 3–4. The relationship between FPC and the other agencies concerned with farm labor (WFA, DIR) was not without tension; see Parker to Warren, September 1, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 728; minutes of the Commission of Immigration and Housing, June 23, 1944, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH Records, File 2293.

3. Sweigert memo, July 11, 1944, Warren Papers, FPC, File 728; *Report of Activities* I, 4–8.

4. *Report of* Activities I, 8–10.

5. Ibid., 10–12.

6. Ibid., 21.

7. Igler, *Industrial Cowboys*, 123, 141; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 36. An excellent brief overview of the development of Miller & Lux's "corporate geography" is Igler, "Industrial Cowboys." On Miller & Lux's housing conditions, see Street, *Beasts of the Field*, 551.

8. The standard starting point for the riot is the two reports by Carleton Parker, the first executive director of the CCIH: "A Report to His Excellency Hiram W. Johnson . . . on the Causes and All Matters Pertaining to the So-Called Wheatland Hop Fields Riot . . . ," in Parker, *Casual Laborer and Other Essays*, 171–90; "Report on an Inquiry into the Social and Economic Causes that Led to the Wheatland Hop-Field Riot of August 3, 1913," LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 54, Exhibit 8768, 20069–73. Quotations from Parker, *Casual Laborer and Other Essays*, 197, 198. See also Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 36–51.

9. Parker to Lubin, December 31, 1913, DIR Records, Carton 1, File: "General Correspondence, 1913"; CCIH, *Advisory Pamphlet on Camp Sanitation* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1914), 7; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 51.

10. Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 53–55.

11. Brown to Kearney, August 23, 1926, DIR Records, Carton 10, File: "Edward A. Brown"; earlier quotation from "Proceedings of the 60th Convention of Fruit Growers and Farmers," *Monthly Bulletin*, California Department of Agriculture, XVIII (2), 115; quoted in Federal Writers' Project, *Oriental and Mexican Labor Unions and Strikes in California Agriculture*, Monograph 9 (1938), section on Mexican unions and strikes, p. 3; series of letters, Rugg to Brown, May and June 1926, DIR Records, Carton 10, File: "Fred J. Rugg." The essentialist notions of race that drove much of CCIH's work are examined in Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, chap. 4.

12. Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 161–62; on the strikes of the 1930s more generally, see Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, chap. 4; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, chap. 13.

13. Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 164–65.

14. Clements to Cecil, December 18, 1936, in LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 53, Exhibit 8752, 19696, quoted in Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 179; State Rural Resettlement, California Division of Rehabilitation of the Resettlement Administration, "Statement in Support of Project to Establish Camps in California"; memoranda on operation of camps for migrants in California agriculture, 8–3–35, both in I. W. Wood Papers, Box 1, File: "Documents Re: Migrant Laborers. . . ." On the deportation of ethnic Mexicans during the Depression, see Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 72–75; Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*.

15. "Statement in Support"; California State Relief Administration, *Transients in Cali-*

fornia (Sacramento: Mimeo, 1936); "Construction Development, Present and Projected Migratory Labor Camps, Region IX . . . ," LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 59, Exhibit 9374, 21920–21; Omer Mills, "Farm Labor Programs of the Farm Security Administration," LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 59, Exhibit 9376, 21924–30; Stein, *California and the Dust Bowl Migration*, 151; Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 270; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 182.

16. See, for example, the comments of Lawrence Hewes, regional director of the FSA, San Francisco (later to serve as the key administrator of the bracero program in its first months), among others, in typed notes, n.d., Taylor Papers (C-B 893), Carton 10, File: "Migratory Labor Camps Memos and Letters." Steinbeck, *Their Blood is Strong*, 16. In the attitudes of Okies toward unions, see Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 127–29; Starr, *Endangered Dreams*, 239; Gregory, *American Exodus*, 154–64.

17. Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 270; see also Nelson to Taylor, June 11, 1935, Taylor Papers (C-B 893), Carton 10, File: "Migratory Labor Camps—Memos and Letters." Growers' quotations from LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 62, Exhibit 9577–C, 302–3; quoted in LaFollette Committee *Report*, Part VIII (Reports 1150, Parts 1 to 4, 77th Congress, 1944), 1224, 1226–27. On everyday life in the camps in the 1930s, see the reports of camp manager Tom Collins in I. W. Wood Papers, Box 1, File: "Arvin Migratory Labor Camp: Weekly Reports, 1935–1936," esp. February 8, 1936; see also Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 184–85. Complaints that camps would become "hotbeds" of radical activity if they were not totally controlled by growers started early; see "Agricultural Labor Camps," *El Centro Morning Post*, September 22, 1935; "Migrant Camp is Red Hotbed," *Yuba City Herald*, July 9, 1936; "Growers Condemn Tugwell's Camps: Charges Places for Migratory Workers are Hotbeds of Radical Agitation," *New York Times*, August 2, 1936.

18. Brown to Warren, November 3, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 730; statistics on workers housed from "Major Activities of the Farm Production Council," September 1, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 728; prediction of number that would be housed in first season from unknown to Maverick, July 9, 1943, Warren Papers, FPC, File 727.

19. R. L. Adams, "Farm Labor Situation—Prospects for 1945, November 1, 1944," Warren Papers, FPC, File 731.

20. Ibid.; FPC, minutes of meeting, September 14, 1944, Warren Papers, FPC, File 731; MacGregor to Warren, October 17, 1944, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 712.

21. FPC, minutes of meeting, September 14, October 12, 13, 1944, Warren Papers, FPC, File 731; FPC, minutes of meeting, June 14, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732; FPC, minutes of meeting, October 11, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733.

22. FPC, various minutes, 1944–45, Warren Papers, FPC, Files 731–733 (see esp. January 11, 1945, File 732).

23. FPC, minutes of meetings, January 11, February 2, March 1, May 10, 1945; "Pertinent Paragraphs (News Letter #5), Issued by the Staff of the California Farm Production Council," April 3, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732; FPC, minutes of meetings, September 13 and October 11, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733.

24. FPC, minutes of meeting, February 2 and April 12, 1945; supplement to minutes of Meeting, March 1, 1945; Cocheron to Bruton, March 1, 1945, all in Warren Papers, FPC, File 732.

25. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 221; FPC minutes of meetings, November 9 and 10, December 14, 1944, Warren Papers, FPC, File 731; minutes of meetings, April 12 and June 14, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732; minutes of meetings, July 12, August 9, and September 13, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733; "MacGregor to The Secretaries," April 16, 1945, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 713; "Labor Pirating Disrupts Food Harvest Program," *Modesto Bee*, May 17, 1944; Galarza, "Personal and Confidential Memorandum . . . ," 1, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 8.

26. FPC, minutes of meeting, October 12, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733; Jones, *Mexican War Workers*, 15; Jelinek, " California Farm Bureau Federation," 241.

27. California Farm Production Council, minutes of meetings, March 1, April 12, 1945, "Pertinent Paragraphs," 3; MacGregor to Warren, April 16, 1945, all in Warren Papers, FPC, File 732; Adams, "Farm Labor Situation—Prospects for 1945," Warren Papers, FPC, File 731.

28. FPC, minutes of meeting, December 13, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733; "Pertinent Paragraphs," 3, Warren Papers, FPC, File 732; Adams to Warren, November 1, 1944, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 712.

REPRODUCTION

1. Marx, *Capital*, 537, and chaps. 26–33; Harvey, "Accumulation by Dispossession," in *New Imperialism*, 137–82.

2. Henderson, *California and the Fictions of Capital*, 41; Marx, *Capital*, 537. For a fuller theory of social reproduction, see Katz, "Vagabond Capitalism"; Katz, *Growing Up Global*; Breitbach, "Geographies."

3. Geoff Mann, *Our Daily Bread*; Marx, *Capital*, 168.

4. Don Mitchell, "Work, Struggle, Death."

5. Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 99, 105.

CHAPTER 3 *The Dream of Labor Power*

Epigraphs are from Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 94; Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 714.

1. "Outline of the Purposes and Object of the Proposed *SINO-AMERICAN AGENCY, INC.*," n.d., Teague Papers, Box 58, Folder A, emphasis original.

2. Teague, *Fifty Years a Rancher*, 72, 147–50; Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons*; for more on Teague, see Lillard, "Agricultural Statesman."

3. Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*; Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?*

4. McGrady to Bruton, July 8, 1943; Hewes to Davis July 9, 1943, both in Hollenberg Papers, Carton 4, File 2.

5. Wood to Weaver, September 12, 1944; Weaver to Warren, October 12, 1944; Schoonover to Adams, October 17, 1944, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 712.

6. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 50–52, 227; Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 46–47, 50; Jones, *Mexican War Workers*, 12; Craig, *Bracero Program*, chap. 2; McElroy to Douglas, February 26, 1946, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 714; a copy of PL 229 is available in Calisphere, http://content.cdlib.org/xtf/view?docId=hb9j49p4n9&brand=calisphere&doc.view=entire_text (accessed January 13, 2009).

7. FPC, minutes of meeting, August 9, 1945, Warren Papers, FPC, File 733; R. L. Adams, "1946 Farm Labor Prospects," January 14, 1946, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 714.

8. Resolution of the San Joaquin County Industrial Union Council, March 4, 1946; McColly to Jensen, March 29, 1946; Benner to Warren, February 1, 1946; Douglass and fifty-two others to Warren, February 12, 1946; Department of Labor, Retraining and Reemployment Administration, "Recommendations on Federal, State, and Local Action Relating to Migrant Workers Required to Meet Labor Needs for Food Production in 1946," adopted by the Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor, July 1946, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 714; MacGregor to Warren, March 4, 1946, Warren Papers, FPC, File 734; Division of Housing, "Monthly Report to Director," May 1946; "Monthly Report to Director," October 1946, both in Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2296; see also typescript from "Report of the Industrial Relations Department to the Governor's Council," Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 24; "Subject Matter for Presentation to the Regular Staff Meeting to be Held on March 5, 1946," Taylor Papers, Box 40, File 33.

9. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 211–12.

10. Burke to Clayton, May 13, 1947; McElroy to Burke, June 6, 1947, both in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715; President's Commission on Migratory Labor, *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 52–54; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 58; Calavita, *Inside the State*, 24, 218, appendix B; Coalson, "Mexican Contract Labor," esp. 233.

11. Grower quoted in Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 152; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 58. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 220.

12. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 99; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 58; Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation," 228; Grove, "Mexican Farm Labor Program"; MacGregor to Warren, "*CONFIDENTIAL*," October 4, 1946; see also MacGregor to Warren, March 4, 1946, both in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 714; Division of Housing, "Monthly Report to Director," October 1946, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2296, reported that during the 1946 harvest season there was "an over supply of workers" in the state.

13. *El Angelino* article reprinted in Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 11; see Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 61; second quotation from Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 62–63; Gonzalez provides an excellent dissection of how "the bracero program's intensely exploitative and injurious nature was transnational in scope" (57)

in chap. 2 of *Guest Workers*. See also Jaime Vélez Storey, "The Braceros," in Mraz and Storey, *Uprooted*, 31–53, esp. 38–45; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 244–45; notes, "Three Nationals—Italian camp—Watsonville" (1955), Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6; "Salvador—Notes—How I got into the braceros business" (1958), Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 1. An excellent account of the process of enrolling braceros at the Hermosillo center, which operated from 1949 to 1952, is available as Ernesto Galarza, "Report on Trip to Contracting Center for Mexican Contract Nationals at Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, April 22, 1951," Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 1. Another excellent discussion of the process as it operated in the 1950s is Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 139–49.

14. The former bracero is quoted in Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 72; for accounts of the vetting and spraying process, see, ibid., 69–76; Jose-Rodolfo Jacobo, *Los Braceros*, see esp. the oral histories of Jésus Ortiz (35–37), José Luis Gutiérrez-Navarro (83–86), Rodolfo Jacobo-Páramo (95–98), and Santiago Aguilar-Álvarez (107–9).

15. Jacabo, *Los Braceros*, oral histories of Marcelo Zapeda (48), Rufilio González-Sánchez (78), Rodolfo Jacobo-Páramo (96), Santiago Aguilar-Álvarez (108), Edmundo Ángeles Castillo (114), and José Perez (119).

16. See, for example, "A New Deal for the Mexican Worker," *Look*, September 22, 1959, 54–56, Draper Papers, Box 20, File 12. The trope of the "good bracero" is examined in Gonzalez, *Guest Worker or Colonized Labor?* 92–93.

17. Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 76, 79, 100–101; Ernesto Galarza, "Personal and Confidential Memorandum on Mexican Contract Workers in the United States" (1944), Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 8.

18. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 135. Galarza's conclusions are well supported by the analysis of the 1951 report of the President's Commission on Migratory Labor, *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 59–61.

19. Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market*, 110, 97–98; testimony of James Wood, LaFollette Committee *Hearings*, Part 51, 18705–6, quoted in ibid., 100–101. For an example of workers successfully pushing wages up out of their appointed groove before the advent of the bracero program, see Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, 166–67.

20. Armstrong to Walker, September 23, 1942; Schoonover to Alison, July 28, 1943; Anglim to Dechant, July 29, 1943, all in Hollenberg Papers, Box 4, File 1.

21. The early memo (Anglim to Dechant, July 29, 1943) raises precisely this possibility.

22. McColly to Jensen, March 29, 1946, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 714.

23. Annual Narrative Report, 1946, Emergency Farm Labor Project, California Extension Service, p. 2, quoted in Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 110; Jelinek, "California Farm Bureau Federation," 237–38.

24. Both growers quoted in Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 112, 114.

25. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 132.

26. Rancho Sespe, "Notice," January 27, 1947; McElroy to Wilson March 19, 1947, both in Warren Papers, FPC 735; Wilhite to Warren, February 25, 1947; Anglim to Burke, March 19, 1947, both in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

27. Kimball to Warren, March 25, 1947; McElroy to Burke, May 23, 1947; Anglim to Burke, March 19, 1947, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

28. Geoff Mann, *Our Daily Bread*, 23; Marglin, *Growth, Distribution and Prices*, 105; quoted in ibid., 22.

29. President's Commission on Migratory Labor, *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 59, 60.

30. Ibid., 158. On increased wages in California immediately after the war, see Kimball to Warren, March 25, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

31. Jacobo, *Los Braceros*, oral history of José Luis Gutiérrez-Navarro, 84, 86.

32. McColly to Members of the Statewide Agricultural Labor Committee, January 21, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

33. Ibid.; "Preliminary Draft of a Bill"; "Resume of the Proposal," all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

34. MacGregor to Warren, February 6, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

SCALE

1. Teague, *Fifty Years a Rancher*, 45, 47.

2. Don Mitchell, "New Axioms"; Don Mitchell, "Devil's Arm"; Schein, "Place of Landscape."

3. An excellent, brief review of the scale concept in contemporary human geography is Marston, "Scale"; Marston's "Social Construction of Scale," together with the debate that followed it, is also useful. The argument about flat ontology is laid out in Marston, Jones, and Woodward, "Human Geography without Scale," which has also sparked much debate. The arguments Marston, Jones, and Woodward make are heavily indebted to ideas at the root of Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, and the reworked poststructuralism of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

4. Smith and Dennis, "Restructuring of Geographical Scale"; Smith, "Afterword," in *Uneven Development*; Smith, "Contours of a Spatialized Politics"; Smith, "Geography"; Herod, "Production of Scale"; Herod, *Labor Geographies*; Marx, *Grundrisse*.

5. Teague, *Fifty Years a Rancher*, 61; Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 100–101; Gonzalez also provides a useful overview of the ways in which American capital dominated Mexican production. For a thorough examination of U.S. capital's imperialist development and exploitation of northern Mexico, see Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*.

6. Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?*; Cohen, *Braceros*; The Bracero History Archive (http://braceroarchive.org; accessed April 19, 2011).

7. Teague, *Fifty Years a Rancher*, 85; "Joseph Di Giorgio."

8. For a similar, even more chilling, examination of the bureaucratic momentum that keeps violent, deadly, even genocidal landscapes functioning fully and efficiently, see Dwork and van Pelt, *Auschwitz*.

9. Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 234.

CHAPTER 4 *Organizing the Landscape*

The epigraph is from Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715, emphasis added.

1. HR 3367 §7(c), 80th Congress, 1st Session, introduced May 7, 1947, copy in Douglas Collection, Box 35, File 9b; "Subject Matter for Presentation to the Regular Staff Meeting to be Held on March 5, 1946," Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 33.

2. "Statement on Behalf of Migratory Farm Labor," June 1947; untitled six-page analysis, both in Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 22; "Bad Features of Farm Labor Bill H.R. 3367," typescript, Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 30. For its part, the FPC claimed it was *already* achieving the goals of the Interagency Committee: McColly to Warren, August 6, 1946, Warren Papers, FPC, File 734.

3. HR 3856, 80th Congress, 1st Session, introduced June 16, 1947, copy in Douglas Collection, Box 98, File 9.

4. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 55–56, 184; a copy of the House version is available in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; a copy of the Senate version, S. 1555, is available in Douglas Collection, Box 35, File 9b.

5. PL 298, §§1, 2; "Notice," USDA, Production and Marketing Administration, Labor Branch, June 27, 1947, Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 7; Clayton to Warren, August 11 and 13, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; "Lonesome Road Again? Families Break Up or Live in Ditches as Camps Liquidate," *San Francisco News*, June 26, 1947, Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 31; "Farm Labor Camps: Operation," December 1, 1950, Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 30.

6. Agricultural Relations Department, Council for Social Action, Congregational Christian Churches, "Federal Farm Labor Camps," Study Monograph No. 1, April 1, 1949, Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 21; "Farm Labor Supply Centers and Mexican Nationals," Special Report, Southwest Division, USDA, Production and Marketing Administration, Labor Branch, February 15, 1947, Hollenberg Papers, Box 3, File 34; Clark Taylor (Division of Population and Rural Life, BAE, USDA), "Present Operation of the Former USDA Labor Camps in the San Joaquin Valley," Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 32.

7. Bunje to Warren, August 12, 1947; Drobish to Warren, telegram, August 14, 1947, both in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; Pace to Warren, December 5, 1947; "Migratory Farm Labor Housing: Background and Factual Data," September 8, 1947; Clayton memo, November 19, 1947, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; California Farm Bureau Federation resolutions for 1946, 1947, "Compilation of California Farm Bureau Federation Resolutions," Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 16; Busick to Galarza, May 27, 1947, Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 7; *California Grange News*, editorial, "Migratory Labor Centers," n.d., Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 31. Of the twenty-eight open labor camps in the state, the federal government owned the land under twenty-three; it leased land for the other five from growers. Dean to Warren, November 24, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716.

8. California Farm Production Council, "Report of Activities of the California Farm Production Council, July 1, 1943 to March 1, 1947," microfilm, University of California,

Davis; minutes of meetings, January 16, 1947, March 6, 1947; April 3, 1947; May 1, 1947; June 5, 1947; Burke to Clayton, February 5, 1947; Burke to Warren, June 30, 1947, all in Warren Papers, FPC, File 735; Warren to Brannan, September 12, 1947; Drobish to Warren, telegram, August 14, 1947; "Migratory Farm Labor Housing: Background and Factual Data, September 8, 1947," all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716.

9. "Notice," USDA, Production and Marketing Administration, Labor Branch, June 27, 1947, Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 7; Migratory Farm Labor Housing: Background and Factual Data, September 8, 1947; Anglim to McColly, August 28, 1947; DIR, DoH, "Report Covering 'Federal' U.S.D.A. Camps"; Washburn to Warren, September 23, 1947; Clayton to Warren, November 7, 1947, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; McColly to Clayton, December 16, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717. The typical process by which growers associations were formed, revocable use permits negotiated, and control over the camps transferred—together with a discussion of camp conditions, problems with tenants, and so on—is outlined in Governor's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, August 2, 1950, Visalia, California, pp. 57–63.

10. State Rural Resettlement, California Division of Rehabilitation of the Resettlement Administration, "Statement in Support of Project to Establish Camps for Migrants in California"; "Memoranda on Operation of Camps for Migrants in California Agriculture, 8–3–25," both in I. W. Wood Papers, Box 1, File: "Documents in Re: Migrant Laborers and Establishment of Camps, June–Dec., 1935." See also Stein, *California and the Dust Bowl Migration*, 150–59; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, chap. 8.

11. DIR, DoH, *Agricultural Labor Family Housing Study*, 9–19; Warren to secretary of agriculture, November 26, 1947 (draft), Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; secretary, Farm Research and Legislative Committee of Kern, Kings, and Tulare Counties, to Warren, February 26, 1948; Ellis and Fisher (California Legislative Conference) to Warren, March 17, 1948; Jacob to Warren, March 20, 1948, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717. (This file contains numerous other letters opposing grower control of the camps and arguing for state operation, many of them like this last letter noting that "cattle especially milk cows have more desirable environment" than do farm workers).

12. Bunje to Warren, October 8, 1947; Clayton to Warren, October 27, 1947; Clayton to Warren, November 7, 1947; Hewitt to Warren, November 8, 1947; Dean to Warren, November 24, 1947, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; Millinton to Warren, resolution, Tulare County Farm Bureau (n.d.); resolution, Butte County Farm Bureau, January 13, 1948; Dougherty to Warren, May 10, 1948, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717; Resolution No. 13 "U.S.D.A. Farm Labor Camps" (1948), CFBF, in Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 16; "Farmer Control of Labor Camps Favored by Growers," *Gridley Herald*, January 28, 1948, Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 32.

13. USDA, BAE and the Institute of Industrial Relations, *Agricultural Labor Force*, 15–17; Clayton to Warren, February 5, February 6, and March 23, 1948; Vassey to Warren, March 5, 1948; Bryant to Warren, March 26, 1948, all in Warren Papers, Employment, File 1202; "Mexican Pact Surprises Valley Official," *Sacramento Bee*, ca. February 26, 1948,

Taylor Papers, Carton 39, File 22; Washburn to Dean, February 26, 1948; Vassey to Warren, March 3, 1948; untitled statement against joint resolution, March 10, 1948, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717; typescript of notes, Senate Committee—Agriculture, March 18, Sen. Joint Res. No. 8; "Labor Camp Bill Approved, Farmers Win in Senate Committee," *San Francisco News*, March 19, 1948, both in Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 21.

14. Anderson to Warren, telegram, March 20, 1948; Trigg to Haggerty, April 6, 1948; Haggerty to Warren, April 13, 1948; Warren to Anderson, April 14, 1948; Anderson to Warren, telegram, April 17, 1948; Warren to Brannon, telegram, April 20, 1948, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717; John Dunlop, Public Housing Administration, "Farm Labor Camps: Liquidation" (1950), Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 30.

15. Drobish, "Present Status of Federal Farm Labor Camps in California," December 12, 1948, Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 21; Dunlop, "Farm Labor Camps: Liquidation," Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 30; Pennebacker to Warren, May 7, 1948; Drobish to Warren, May 10, 1948; MacGregor to Clayton, February 16, 1948, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717. Growers' boasts about the quality of the camps fill the "Minutes of Farm Labor Camps Association Meeting," January 5, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 11.

16. Carl Taylor, "Present Operation of the Former USDA Farm Labor Camps in the San Joaquin Valley," November 15, 1948, Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 32.

17. "Farm Labor Supply Centers in the State of California," Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 11; Drobish, "Present Status of Federal Farm Labor Camps in California," December 27, 1948. Drobish is echoed in Agricultural Relations Department, Council for Social Action, Congregational Christian Churches, "Federal Farm Labor Camps," Study Monograph, No. 1, April 1, 1959, both in Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 21.

18. Paul Taylor, "Perspective on Housing Migratory Agricultural Laborers," 200–201. Many camps in California were transferred on June 19, 1950. Governor's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Fresno, Calif., June 20, 1950, pp. 58–59; Wise to Pasow, July 10, 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 25.

19. Wise to Prasow, July 10, 1950; Miller to Wise, June 6, 1950; Roth to Wise, June 13, 1950; Church to Wise, June 14, 1950; Edsinger to Wise, June 15, 1950; Lolmaugh to Wise, June 19, 1950, all in Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 25; reporter's transcript, meeting of the Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, Fresno, June 20, 1950, pp. 37–39, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 2.

20. Paul Taylor, "Perspective on Housing Migratory Agricultural Laborers," 198; Clayton to Warren, April 13 and April 17, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716.

21. USDA, BAE, and UC Institute of Industrial Relations, *Agricultural Labor Force*, 16; Bryant to Warren, March 22, 1948, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1202; Clayton to Warren, March 23, 1948, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717.

22. Burke to Clayton, May 13, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 24; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 55; Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 55–56.

23. MacGregor to Clayton, February 16, 1948, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717.

24. USDA, BAE, and UC Institute of Industrial Relations, *Agricultural Labor Force*, 16–17.

25. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 25–28; Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 64–66; President's Commission on Migratory Labor, *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 41.

26. Act of July 3, 1948, ch. 823, §1–2, 62 Stat. 1238; Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 66; Calavita, *Inside the State*, 27. Scruggs, *Braceros*, 398–99.

27. Vassey to Warren, July 12, 1948; Vassey to Bryant, August 20, 1948, both in Warren Papers, Employment, File 1204; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 55; "Fall Harvest May Need 45,000 Foreign Workers," *Sacramento Bee*, August 12, 1948, Taylor Papers, Carton 39, File 22; Galarza to Fishburn, September 20, 1948, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 3.

28. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 29–30; Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 68; Scruggs, *Bracero*, 406–7; "Mexico Breaks Farm Labor Pact with U.S.," *Sacramento Bee*, October 19, 1948, Taylor Papers, Carton 39, File 22; Webber to Rivera, October 25, 1948, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 7; see the FPS flier (in Spanish) advertising for workers to come to the San Joaquin Valley for the cotton harvest, Taylor Papers, Carton 40, File 36.

29. Scruggs, *Bracero*, 408; see also Craig, *Bracero Program*, 57; Hayes to Veon, January 1, 1949; Galarza to Hayes, January 18, 1949; Lenhart to Galarza, January 27, 1949; Galarza to Lenhart, February 3, 1949, all in Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

30. Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives*, 41–45, 51–55, and, generally, chaps. 4 and 5; Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 273–79; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 270–73; Jamieson, *Labor Unionism in American Agriculture*. The AFL did retain some interest in agricultural processing and even engaged in some admirable strikes in the cotton gins (concurrent with UCAPAWA strikes in the fields). Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, chap. 7; Arax and Wartzman, *King of California*, 167–70. For an analysis of the shortcomings of UCAPAWA, see Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 126–33. For a pained discussion of Teamster deals in the canneries, see Ernesto Galarza, "The Burning Light: Action and Organizing in the Mexican Community in California," Oral History conducted in 1977, 1978, 1981, by Gabrielle Morris and Timothy Beard, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (1982), available online through Calisphere (accessed June 17, 2008).

31. On Haggerty, see *Labor Leaders View the Warren Years*, Earl Warren Oral History Project, Bancroft Library, University of California, interview by Miriam Feingold Stein and Amelia R. Fry (1976), available online at http://www.archive.org/stream/laborleaders viewoosteirich/laborleadersviewoosteirich_djvu.txt (accessed March 26, 2009). For an example of Haggerty's support for field worker unionizing, see Bryant to Haggerty, April 9, 1948, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8; for a sense of the frustration NFLU leaders felt with the CFL, see Ernesto to Mitch, May 8, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5. On the chartering of NFLU, see Grubbs, "Prelude to Chavez," , 453–69; Baldinger, "Conference of the Excluded," 99–100. A good overview of the NFLU's activities in California is London and Anderson, *So Shall You Reap*, chap. 3.

32. Hank Hasiwar, confidential "Report on Farm Labor Organization in California, March 1947 to April 1949," Galarza Papers, Box 9, File 8.

33. Quotations from Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 15–16, and the glossy, company-produced "Di Giorgio Story," 5, 7. In 1944, revenues exceeded sixteen million dollars. "Joseph Di Giorgio"; see also "Fruit King"; McWilliams, "Strike at Di Giorgio's"; and the company history at www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Di-Giorgio-Corp-Company-History.html (accessed March 26, 2009).

34. "Joseph Di Giorgio," 103. Management housing is described in ibid., 97. Scharrenberg to Galarza, August 27, 1948, Warren Papers, DIR/DoH, File 2297. This document reports on an inspection undertaken almost a year after workers at DiGiorgio went on strike and at a time when the company was touting its excellent housing conditions in a propaganda pamphlet entitled, "A Community Aroused," about which more below. See Galarza to Warren, August 12, 1948, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2297. In April the following year not much had improved, and the boxcar camp, ordered removed the previous year, was still in use. DeAndreis, "Re: Condition of the DiGiorgio Farms Camps—Inspection of 1948—DiGiorgio, Kern County," April 8, 1948; "Notes from Mr. Duclus," April 12, 1949; "DiGiorgio Farms," all in Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2298. In all the voluminous reporting on and analysis of this strike, I can find no support for the DoH claim that regular workers housed on the farm lived "rent free."

35. "Report Covering 'Federal' U.S.D.A. Camps," August 23–29, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 716; Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 201–12.

36. Quotations from Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 101, 99; see Grubbs, "Prelude to Chavez," 456; Judy Stone, "Di Giorgio Strike," *San Mateo County Union Gazette*, January 9, 1948, available online at www.criticjudystone.com/digiorgio.html (accessed March 26, 2009).

37. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 101; Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 20, 22; Grubbs, "Prelude to Chavez," 456; Street, "Poverty in the Valley," 28. A more general account of the strike appears as chap. 4 in Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*; Hasiwar to DiGiorgio, September 22, 1947, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6; Hasiwar, "Report on Farm Labor Organization in California," 7.

38. "Strike Bulletin #2, October 3, 1947, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 4; Grubbs, "Prelude to Chavez," 456–57; "For Immediate Release," October 2, 1947, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 4; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 103–4; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 216; Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 23; Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 147–48; "Cooperative Employment Agreement," *Procedural Manual, Farm Labor Transportation Program*, September 8, 1942, Calisphere. Rasmussen's careful accounting of the changes in the work agreements between 1943 and 1947 indicates no lessening of the bar to braceros being used as strikebreakers. Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 208–13. *Bakersfield Californian*, November 13, 1947, quoted in Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 102–3; "Strike Bulletin #2," October 3, 1947, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 4. On the use of ideologies of localism and community against farm worker–strikers, see Don Mitchell, "Scales of Justice."

39. Notes on phone call with Mr. Overby of Department of Agriculture, October 14,

1947, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 4; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 104. Galarza's histories are inconsistent on the date the braceros departed. It was November 10, 1947. "130 Nationals Are Removed From DiGiorgio Farms," *Fresno Bee*, November 10, 1947. See also "DiGiorgio May Lose Mexicans," *Fresno Bee*, October 8, 1947.

40. "Di Giorgio Men Are Blocked Off Roads by Strikers," *Fresno Bee-Republican*, October 12, 1947; "Labor Comment," *Oakland Tribune*, November 18, 1947; "Decline Meeting Bid," *Fresno Bee-Republican*, October 12, 1947; "Union Replies to Eviction Action," *Fresno Bee*, November 26, 1947; "Farm Union Protests 'Strikebreakers,'" *Oakland Tribune*, December 7, 1947; "Judge Backs DiGiorgio Efforts to Oust 11 Tenants at Arvin," *Modesto Bee*, January 8, 1948; "Vandals Destroy DiGiorgio Trees," *Fresno Bee*, December 31, 1947; "Workers Battle Five Pickets at DiGiorgio Ranch," *Fresno Bee*, February 7, 1948; "3 Are Jailed as Tension Mounts in Farm Strike," *Fresno Bee*, February 10, 1947; "DiGiorgio Strike Fears Are Probed By Howser Aides," *Fresno Bee*, February 11, 1948; "Mystery Volley Wounds Arvin Striker Chief," *Fresno Bee*, May 18, 1948; "Gunman Hunt Reward Rises to $1,500," *Fresno Bee*, May 20, 1948; "Warren Calls on Public To Help in Gunman Hunt," *Fresno Bee*, May 21, 1948; Street, "Poverty in the Valley of Plenty," 30, 36–37; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 106–7, 114; Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 64–66; Grubbs, "Prelude to Chavez," 457. On the general tendency of San Joaquin Valley growers to never admit that there was a strike in progress, and thus to never concede that there was room for negotiation or conciliation, see Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 287.

41. "Court Injunction Hits Agricultural Workers in Long Strike," *Business Week*, July 31, 1948, 74–76; Ken Blum and Richard Boydon, "Three Big DiGiorgio Strikes," typescript, section on "1947–1950 DiGiorgio Grape Strike (Arvin Area)," p. 3, Draper Collection, Box 13, File 2; Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 26; Grubbs, "Prelude to Chavez," 463; Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 148; Street, "Poverty in the Valley," 30.

42. Thomas Werdel, "Congressional Committee Bares Facts on Alleged Di Giorgio Ranch Strike," "Extension of Remarks," *Appendix to the Congressional Record*, March 9, 1950, pp. A1817–A1820, quotation from p. A1817; reprinted as an appendix to Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 288–97, see also 25–26. The history of the strike, the "Extension of Remarks," the film, and the endless court cases that surrounded them all is exhaustively told in Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, as well as through the series of depositions from the 1963 suit, *Ernesto Galarza v. DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation et al.*, Galarza Papers, Box 40.

43. *Poverty in the Valley*, script, 2–3, 11–12, in Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2298. Richard Street provides an excellent analysis of the film and the controversies surrounding it in "Poverty and the Valley of Plenty," and I here draw on his account as well as that of Galarza in *Spiders in the House*, chap. 2.

44. "Agreement," May 23, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 41, File 4; Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 37–40, 64–65, 106–26; Street, "Poverty in the Valley," 34.

45. Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 66, 76.

46. Hasiwar to Warren, September 7, 1949; Mitchell to Truman, September 28, 1949, both in Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 6; "Cotton Pickers Quit Jobs in Wage Protest," *Bakers-*

field Californian, clipping, n.d., Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 7. On antipicketing laws in the 1930s, see Mitchell, "Scales of Justice."

47. "Cotton Pickers Quit Jobs in Wage Protest," *Bakersfield Californian*, clipping, n.d.; letter to editor, "Cotton Picking Wage," *Fresno Bee*, September 9, 1949; "Loudspeaker Issue Hits Board Meeting," *Bakersfield California*, October 4, 1949; "Tulare Officers Jail Leaders of Cotton Caravan, *Fresno Bee*, September 22, 1947; Shullman and Mayer to Sheriff of Kings County, telegram, September 26, 1949; Shullman and Mayer to Wilson (Justice of Peace), September 26, 1949, all in Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 7; "Cotton Strike is Due on Monday" and "Kern Cotton Pickers Threaten Strike," both *Oakland Tribune*, September 16, 1949; "Lakeview, September 27, 1949, to Cotton Pickers, Signed By Executive Board Local 247, NFLU-AFL," Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 9; "Cottonwood—strike organization," *J.H. McLaughlin v. County of Tulare et al.*, Superior Court of California For the County of Tulare, No. 39,506, October 29, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 8; Mitchell to Truman, September 12, 1949; Mitch to Galarza, telegram, September 22, 1949; Mitchell to International and National Unions, Central Labor Bodies, Local Unions, n.d.; "Kings Officials Move to Halt Caravans in Cotton Walkout: Tulare County Also Invokes Rulings as Tension Gains," *Hanford Daily Sentinel*; Pratt to Marsh, November 10, 1949; H. L. Mitchell, "Private and Confidential Memorandum, California Farm Workers Win Strike," 2, all in Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 6; "Cotton Pickers Strike May Spread," *Oakland Tribune*, September 23, 1949; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 121–27; London and Anderson, *So Shall You Reap*, 44. A copy of Fresno's Anti-noise Ordinance, Ordinance No. 415, typical of the species, even though it was passed a year after this strike, is available in Galarza Papers, Box 31, File 1. The tactic of filling the jails was an old IWW tactic, picked up by a newly defiant NFLU. See, for example, Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*; Foner, *Fellow Workers and Friends*.

48. Unmarked clipping, dated June 1950, "'Man Bites Dog': Big Farmer Fined," Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 7; untitled conciliation agreement signed by Glenn Bowers, of the California Labor Conciliation Service, Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 9; Mitchell, "Private and Confidential Memorandum," 1, Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 6.

49. "Growers of 45,000 Acres of Cotton Agree on $3.00 100 Pounds," *Firebaugh Journal*, October 7, 1949; "Union Ends Valley Cotton Strike at Victory Meeting," *Fresno Bee*, October 19, 1949, both in Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 7; Green to Galarza, telegram, October 7, 1949; Green to Hasiwar, telegram, October 7, 1949; Mitchell, "Private and Confidential Memorandum," 1, all in Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 6; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 127. See also *Workers on the Land in 1949: Report of the Executive Board to the 16th Annual Convention, National Farm Labor Union, A.F. of L.*, Fresno, Calif., January 13–15, 1950, pp. 2–3, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 4.

50. Kent to Warren, November 5, 1949; Roche to Warren, November 17, 1949; Brennan to Warren, November 18, 1949, all in Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717; "Kings County District Attorney Asks for Inquest into Death of Two Babies Of Hunger in Labor Camps," *The Independent-Journal*, November 3, 1949; "Infant of Migrant Farm Workers Died of Malnutrition," *Hayward Daily Review*, November 11, 1949; "Child Starvation Placed in

Hundreds," *Long Beach Independent*, November 11, 1949; "Minutes, Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley," September 12, 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 3; "San Joaquin Valley Health and Welfare Meeting, Fresno, December 28 and 29, 1949"; "Report of the Officers' Meeting at Fresno State College 12–28–49 and 12–29–49, Subject: Living Conditions of Migrants in the Six San Joaquin Counties: Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern," both in Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 28. An excellent analysis of cotton mechanization in California at this time is Dennis Nodín Valdés, "Machine Politics in California Agriculture, 1945–1990s," *Pacific Historical Review* 63 (1994): 203–24, esp. 207–10.

51. Testimony of Don Jensen, director of County Welfare, Fresno County, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Fresno, June 20, 1950, pp. 15–16; Burke to Clayton, May 13, 1947, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 715.

VIOLENCE

1. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 152; Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*; Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*; Street, *Beasts of the Field*. This "interchapter" draws explicitly on Don Mitchell, "Battle/Fields" esp. 149–51.

2. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 251, 153; Fuller, "Supply of Agricultural Labor."

3. Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*, 40; Farmer, "Anthropology of Structural Violence." The *locus classicus* of the theory of structural violence is Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," 167–91. An excellent review made in relation to contemporary California is Benson, "El Campo."

CHAPTER 5 *The Persistent Landscape*

Epigraphs are from "Analysis of the International Executive Agreement between Mexico and the United States for the Recruitment of Farm Labor, Signed August 1, 1949," Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 5, emphasis added; and Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 143.

1. Ernesto to Mitch, January 8, 1949; untitled analysis by Galarza dated January 8, 1949, both in Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 5; Galarza to Haggerty, January 17, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 7. See also Lawrence Davies, "Farm Labor Union Urges Mexican Deal End," *New York Times*, January 15, 1950; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 408–9.

2. Galarza to Haggerty, January 17, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 7; untitled analysis by Galarza, January 8, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 5. An excellent analysis of Galarza's role in shaping farm labor activism in California can be found in London and Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 115–40; see also Pitti, "Ernesto Galarza."

3. Untitled analysis by Galarza, January 8, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 5.

4. Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 70–71; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 414–16; Copp, *"Wetbacks" and Braceros*, 68–69.

5. The number of regularized braceros is from *Workers on the Land in 1949: Report of*

the Executive Board to the 16th Annual Convention of the National Farm Labor Union of the A.F. of L., Fresno, Calif., January 13–15, 1950, p. 11, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 4. Other reports put the number of regularized "wetbacks" at 78,000 by the end of 1949; Gladwin Hill, "California Jobs Going to Mexicans in Areas having Huge Idle Rolls," *New York Times*, March 27, 1950, 35. Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 72; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 417–18.

6. Ernesto Galarza, "Analysis of the International Executive Agreement between Mexico and the United States for the Recruitment of Farm Labor, Signed August 1, 1949," p. 4, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 5.

7. Swayzee to Galarza, September 28, 1949, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 3; Department of Employment, "Basic Information for the Committee to Survey Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley," n.d., pp. 46–47, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 17.

8. Governor's Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley: Final Report and Recommendations* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1951), 111, 113, 174; memo, Becker to Committee to Survey Agricultural Labor Resources, August 1, 1950, abstracted by committee, p. 1; Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 7a, emphasis original.

9. Hank Hasiwar, "Report on the Imperial Valley," July 30, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 6. In a letter to Representative John Shelley, Galarza says that the number "was confirmed on February 15, 1950, by Mr. Edward F. Hayes," Galarza to Shelley, February 17, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 6. In late March, the *New York Times* reported that there were 3200 contract workers in the Valley: Gladwin Hill, "California Jobs Going to Mexicans in Areas Having Huge Idle Rolls," *New York Times*, March 28, 1950, 35. On May 1, after the peak harvest had passed, there were 2,600 braceros in Imperial County, according to the Farm Placement Service: reporter's transcript, minutes of the meeting of the Committee to Survey the Agricultural Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, May 17, 1950, pp. 2–3, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 2; Small to Warren, March 5, 1951, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1219; Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, 76.

10. Hasiwar, "Report on the Imperial Valley," January 30, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 6; see also testimony of Will Swearingen, NFLU, *Transcript of Hearing*, Fresno, June 20, 1950, p. 42; Clayton to Warren, February 5 and February 6, 1948, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1202. Other displaced domestic Imperial Valley workers, who were frequently Mexicano, moved to the Santa Clara Valley to seek work in the fruit orchards and canneries. Pitti, *Devil in Silicon Valley*, 140, 142.

11. Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Housing, State of California, *Report on Housing in the San Joaquin Valley to the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Labor Resources Committee*, November 1950, p. ii, quoting the *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the California Bureau of Labor Statistics* (1911–12), 47, Division of Housing Records, File 30.

12. Ann Foley Scheuring, "Reminiscences on People and Change in California Agriculture 1900–1975: J. Earl Coke," Oral History Interview, The Oral History Center, University of California, Davis (1976), p. 89; "San Joaquin Valley Health and Welfare Meeting, Fresno December 28 and 29, 1949," Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 28. Though

this was a closed-door meeting according to the internal reports of it, it was nonetheless reported in the papers; see, for example, "Officials Seek Benefits for Farm Workers," *Oakland Tribune*, December 30, 1949, 6D.

13. "Background and Purposes of the Committee," n.d., p. 1, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 1 (also in Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 28); "Fresno County Board of Supervisors Report to the Governor's Committee on Agricultural Labor Resources Covering Welfare, Health, and Hospital Care," n.d., Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 6; testimony of Don Jensen, Fresno County director of welfare, Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, *Transcript of Hearing*, Fresno, June 20, 1950, pp. 8–16, 7–14; "Tulare County Board of Supervisors' Report to the Committee on Seasonal Labor Problems in the San Joaquin Valley with Reference to Welfare and Health," Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, *Transcript of Hearing*, Visalia, August 2, 1950, pp. 7–14; testimony of William Patterson, State Department of Education, Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, *Transcript of Hearing*, Corcoran, August 3, 1950, pp. 50–52.

14. "Background and Purpose of the Committee," Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 1; Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, minutes of meeting, March 20, 1950, p. 3; Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 2; minutes of meeting, September 12, 1950, pp. 1–2; Donald Davy, "Twenty-Eight Infant Deaths—Kings and Fresno Counties, *October and November 1949*," both in Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 3; Scheuring, "Reminiscences on People and Change," xvii; "Earl Coke, Agriculture Agency Chief, Resigns," *Modesto Bee*, August 22, 1972, D2; Earl C. Waters, "Shift of Power in State," *Pasadena Star-News*, September 3, 1972, 10. Warren's department secretary, M. F. Small, discusses Prasow and some of the other appointees to the committee in Amelia Fry and Gabrielle Morris, Oral History Interview with M. F. Small, Regional Oral History Office, Earl Warren Oral History Project, 1972, pp. 119–23, though his recollections are of doubtful accuracy: he is confused on the African American who served on the committee. Small talks about James Stratton ("Brilliant fellow and very personable fellow. He's a full-blooded negro, I think. He has the broad features, and all this sort of thing. A very delightful man, and a well-educated man" [p. 121]). The member of the Urban League from San Francisco who served on the committee (after much discussion and Governor Warren's insistence that there be a black member) was Seaton W. Manning, its Bay Area executive director. He also talks of the female member as being "Mrs. Hubert Wyckoff of Watsonville," when it was actually Miss Ysabel Forker of Bakersfield; Wyckoff's wife's name was Florence. Randall Jarrell, "Hubert C. Wyckoff, Jr. Attorney and Arbitrator," Oral History, Volume II, University of Santa Cruz (1985), p. 41. See also "Paul Prasow, Management: Los Angeles, In Memoriam, 1985," Calisphere.

15. Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, minutes of meeting, March 20, 1950, p. 1, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 2; "Selected List of Committees and Agencies Making Reports on Migratory Farm Labor, 1909–1950," appendix A in Governor's Committee, ibid., p. 362; Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the*

San Joaquin Valley, 10–11; minutes of Meeting, March 29, 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 2.

16. Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 84, 156; President's Commission on Migratory Labor, *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 130, 134. For growers' claims about the wages they paid, see, for example, testimony of John Arthur Reynolds (Central Valley Empire Association), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Fresno, June 20, pp. 5–6; testimony of *John Arthur Reynolds*, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Corcoran, August 3, pp. 37–38; testimony of Ernest Johnson (Merced County Farm Bureau), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Merced, September 12, 1950, p. 20.

17. Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 158, 171–72; *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 129.

18. Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 158, citing USDA, BAE, *Agricultural Labor Force*, 39, 44.

19. Appendix A, "Resolution by the Central Valley Empire Association," reprinted in Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 296; see also the testimony of the CVEA's John Arthur Reynolds, *Testimony of Public Hearings*, Corcoran, August 3, 1950, pp. 29–30, which makes mention of the press's "good intentions" but also its lack of "the complete picture." Not all farmers were willing to go so far. In an official statement, the Fresno County Farm Bureau called the reports of the infant deaths "much publicized slanders"; *Transcript of Hearing*, Fresno, June 21, 1950, p. 103.

20. On wages, see testimony of Gus Baker (farmer), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Visalia, August 2, 1950, p. 6; see also testimony of Charles Gibbs (Associated Farmers), ibid., p. 2; statement of Roy R. McClain (large farmer), ibid., p. 44; testimony of M. W. Dula (Tulare Farm Labor Advisory Committee), ibid., p. 52; testimony of Domer F. Power (Tulare County Rural Housing Authority), ibid., pp. 68–69; testimony of Ernest Johnson (Merced County Farm Bureau Federation), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Merced, September 12, 1950, p. 20; testimony of A. J. Sturtevant (farmer), ibid., p. 27; testimony of Fred Thiemann (Stanislaus County Farm Bureau), ibid., p. 51; testimony of Walter C. Stone (farmer and labor contractor), ibid., p. 77; on the profligacy of farm workers, see testimony of M. W. Dula (Tulare Farm Advisory Committee), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Visalia, p. 53; comments of Haggerty, ibid., p. 80; see also testimony of William Jennings (Tulare County Farm Bureau), ibid., p. 91; testimony of E. R. Huston (farmer), *Transcript of Public Hearings*, Corcoran, August 3, 1950, p. 67; testimony of Clyde Houk (farmer), *Transcript of Public Heating*, Merced, September 12, 1950, pp. 31–32; testimony of Earnest J. Converse, ibid., p. 70. Not all farmers agreed with this description of farm workers, of course. See the testimony of H. G. McKeever (farmer), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Corcoran, p. 81. On insurance, see, for example, "Statement of the California Farm Bureau Federation" (and following discussion), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Visalia, August 2, 1950, pp. 15–19; testimony of Ernest Johnson (Merced County Farm Bureau), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Merced, September 12, 1950, p. 20; testimony of Clyde Houk (farmer), ibid., p. 33; testimony of Allen Hatch (Madera County Farm Bureau),

ibid., p. 40. testimony of Roscoe Bessey (Kings County Farm Bureau), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Corcoran, August 3, 1950, p. 5. On chiselers, see, for example, testimony of M. M. Cardoza, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Corcoran, August 3, 1950, p. 66.

21. For growers' boasts, see testimony of M. M. Cardoza, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Corcoran, August 3, 1950, p. 44. The Labor Camp Act: Labor Code, Article 4, Chapter 1, Part 9, Division II (1937) incorporated the Labor Camp Act and is reprinted in Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 224–26; see also the discussion in ibid., 205; Samuel Wood, "Administrative Analysis of the Division of Housing, California State Department of Industrial Relations," typescript, October 23, 1950, Taylor Papers, Carton 41, File 15; Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Housing, Monthly Labor Camp Inspection Reports (September 1950 to July 1954), Division of Housing Records, File 61.

22. "Farm Labor Housing Report, Tulare County, February 27, 1950," Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 10; Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 206, table 2.

23. Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 210; Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Housing,, Monthly Labor Camp Inspection Reports (September 1950 to July 1954), Division of Housing Records, File 61; Wood, "Administrative Analysis"; Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 211. On the origins of this report, see Haslett to Collins, June 29, 1950, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2299; Small memo, July 5, 1950, Warren Papers, Farm Labor, File 717; Wise to Prasow, Governor's Committee, July 10, 1950, ALR of SJV, File 25; see also Haslett to Small, September 18, 1951, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2300.

24. Minutes of meeting, Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, March 20, 1950, p. 10, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 2; minutes of meeting, September 12, 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 3; State of California, Department of Public Health, Maternal and Child Health in the San Joaquin Valley Area as Related to the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Families," 1950, appendixes IV and V, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 20; minutes, San Joaquin Valley Health and Welfare Meeting, 28–29 December, 1949, Taylor Papers, Carton 44, File 28; California Department of Public Health, "Report to the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Labor Resources Committee," November 14, 1950, pp. 9–10, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 20.

25. Testimony of Dr. Lee Stone (Madera County health officer), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Merced, September 12, 1950, pp. 10–11; see also testimony of Dr. Donald E. Upp (Kings County Health Department), ibid., p. 56; testimony of Roscoe Bessey (Kings County Farm Bureau), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Corcoran, August 3, 1950, p. 5; testimony of John Reynolds (CVEA), ibid., p. 40; testimony of Forest Riley (farmer), ibid., p. 80; testimony of Gertrude Porterfield (Tulare County Welfare Department), *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Visalia, August 2, 1950, p. 11; testimony of Andrew Pixton (citrus grower), ibid., p. 76. testimony of Byron Jennings (Tulare County Farm Bureau), ibid., p. 92. Tes-

timony of Ernest Johnson (Merced County Farm Bureau), ibid., p. 19; testimony of I. H. Teilman (Fresno County Coordinating Council), ibid., p. 57.

26. Testimony of Edward Nichols, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Fresno, June 21, p. 92; testimony of Reed Clegg, ibid., June 20, p. 26; testimony of Will Swearingen, ibid., pp. 37–38.

27. Testimony of Bertha Rankin, ibid., June 21, pp. 82–83; Becker, "To the Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley—Meeting in Bakersfield, August 1, 1950," Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 7a, emphasis original.

28. Anonymous memo, July 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 10; testimony of Charles Gibbs, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Visalia, August 2, 1950, pp. 2–4. To his credit, committee member Chester Cary, of the Fresno Federated Trades Council, called Gibbs out, upbraiding him for not addressing the actual problems facing farmers and farm workers and suggesting solutions. Ibid., pp. 4–5. See also, L. P. Webdell, affidavit, July 27, 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 10. Ten days later Gibbs's red-baiting was repeated by the Imperial Valley Farmers Association's Keith Mets in testimony in Los Angeles before the President's Commission on Migratory Labor. "Statement of Keith Mets," Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 8.

29. California Farm Bureau Federation, "To The Governor's Committee on the Season Labor Problems of the San Joaquin Valley," attached to Venstrom to Prasow, November 24, 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 16.

30. Statement of Keith Mets, August 12, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 8; the executive order establishing the committee is in *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, appendix, 187–88. On the creation of the commission, see Kirstein, "Agribusiness, Labor, and the Wetbacks"; Kirstein, *Anglo Over Bracero*, chap. 6.

31. Gladwin Hill, "Big Farms Blamed for Migrant Woes," *New York Times*, August 13, 1950.

32. Small to Warren, August 16, 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 16.

33. Ibid. Some of Cardenas's testimony before the President's Commission is relayed in Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 75–76.

34. Testimony of Rene Cardenas, *Transcript of Public Hearing*, Merced, September 12, 1950, pp. 59, 60; statement of Edward Hayes [spelled Hays in the transcript], ibid., p. 62.

35. Testimony of Rene Cardenas, ibid., pp. 59, 61–62.

36. Ocelio Vasquez to all members of the association, February 7, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 21, File 7.

37. Employment Service Program Letter, No. 128, January 16, 1950, Sections 1530–1629, cited in Norton (USES) to Bryant (California Department of Employment), April 24, 1950; Warren Papers, Employment, File 1214; Roney to Campbell, April 25, 1950, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1214, also in Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9; Areas III & IV, Memorandum No. 336, from Byrnes, April 26, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9. Despite the April 25 letters, on May 5, the Fresno office of the Department of Employment claimed to have received "no instructions from our State Office" about cooperating with the NFLU. Marsh to Swearingen, May 5, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

38. E. G. to Hank, May 2, 1950; Galarza to Finney, May 2, 1950, both in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 4.

39. "Confidential," El Centro, April 14, 1950; "Confidencial," El Centro, 14 Abril de 1950, both in Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9.

40. Small to Bryant, May 10, 1950; Small to Scroggins, May 17, 1950, both in Warren Papers, Employment, File 1214. Small reported receiving telephone calls and telegrams from the Associated Farmers, the CFBF, the CVEA, and farmers from various parts of the state; Small to Scroggins, May 17, 1950, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1214; State Scores U.S. 'Farm Union Plot,'" *Oakland Tribune*, May 16, 1950, 14; "Gov't Charged with Organizing Farm Labor," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, May 16, 1950, 5.

41. Roney to area managers, May 24, 1950; Brockway (per Norton) to Galarza, May 25, 1950; Campbell to Galarza, June 14, 1950, all in Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9.

42. Santana to Galarza, May 25, 1950; Sargent to Galarza, May 25, 1950; Becker to Munson, May 25, 1950; Becker to Galarza, Myatt, Swearingen, Tarr, and Williams, May 25, 1950, all in Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9. See also "NFLU Fresno, Special Notice," Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

43. Brockway to Galarza, May 26, 1950; Brockway to Galarza, June 7, 1950; Bryant to Brockway, June 8, 1950; Becker to Hayes, June 12, 1950, all in Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9; Brockway to Haggerty, Hasiwar, Becker, Bryant, Hayes, Huxley, Norton, June 15, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 1.

44. Brockway to Haggerty, Hasiwar, Becker, Bryant, Hayes, Huxley, Norton, June 15, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 1; Hasiwar to Haggerty, July 20, 1950; Huxley to Becker, July 27, 1950, both in Galarza Papers, Box 42, File 9; "Farm Laborers Go Union: Ask Tomato Wage Raise," unmarked clipping, September 7, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 9; Galarza to Torreano, September 13, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 8; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 135–36.

45. Anon. (at Alexander H. Schullman, attorney at law) to Galarza, September 6, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 7; Galarza to Mitchell, telegram, September 11, 1950; Mitchell to Galarza, telegram, September 12, 1950, both in Galarza Papers Box 46, File 8; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 137, 138.

46. Galarza to "All Tomato Growers in the Tracy Area," September 11, 1950; Galarza to Boke, telegram, n.d. [September 1950]; Galarza to Warren, telegram, September 11, 1950, all in Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 8; Oakley to Small, September 14, 1950, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2299.

47. Organizing Committee to All Local Merchants, September 14, 1950; Galarza to Hansen, telegram, n.d.; Galarza to Weber, telegram, n.d.; Galarza to Mitchell, telegram, n.d., all in Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 8; "Strike Version Conflict; Union Protests 'Police,'" unmarked clipping, September 18, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 9; "2500 Tomato Pickers Due to Strike in Stockton Area: No Violence Visioned But Police Plan Special Patrols," *Oakland Tribune*, September 15, 1950, 26; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 140–41.

48. Galarza to Colina, telegram, n.d.; Galarza to Brockway, telegram, September 13,

1950; Galarza to Towns, telegram, September 13, 1950; Mitchell to Galarza, September 18, 1950; Hayes to Galarza, telegram, September 14, 1950; Galarza to Weber, telegram, n.d.; Tobin to Mitchell, October 11, 1950, all in Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 8; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 140–41.

49. "Officers Break Up Auto Caravan of Tomato Strikers," unmarked clipping, September 21, 1950; "Pickets Appear at Tracy Heinz Company Plant," unmarked clipping, October 2, 1950, both in Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 9; "Anti Caravan Rule Hearing is Delayed," *Modesto Bee*, October 12, 1950, 16; Hansen to Hasiwar, October 2, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 8; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 142–43. Many of the braceros working in the San Joaquin were "dried out wetbacks." Galarza to Brockway, December 3, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 1; Rubottom to Galarza, December 6, 1950, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 3.

50. "Striking Tomato Pickers Receive Increase in Pay," *Modesto Bee*, September 27, 1950; "Tomato Strike Apparently Finished," *Tracy Press*, October 5, 1950; E. G. to Bill, October 9, 1950, all in Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6; "NFLU Strikes to Win $4 rate for Cotton Pickers," unmarked clipping; "20,000 Cotton Pickers Win $1 More Per Day," unmarked clipping, November 1950, both in Galarza Papers, Box 33, File 7.

51. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 144–45; de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, 105.

52. Minutes of meeting, Committee to Survey the Agricultural Labor Resources of the San Joaquin Valley, November 28 and 29, 1950, Governor's Committee, ALR of SJV, File 3; Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 51; President's Commission on Migratory Labor, *Migratory Labor in American Agriculture*, 65–66.

53. "Proposed Statement for Labor Management Conference, Monday, December 11, 1950"; Small to Galarza, December 13, 1950, both in Warren Papers, Employment, File 1217; Roney to Small, December 13, 1950, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1217, emphasis original; Bryant to Warren, January 25, 1951, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1218, emphasis original.

54. Small to Warren, January 16, 1951, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1218.

DETERMINATION

1. Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*; Pred, "Place and Historically-Contingent Process"; Williams, *Marxism and Literature*.

2. Williams, *County and the City*, 104. This "interchapter" draws in part on the first part of Don Mitchell, "Labor's Geography."

3. Harvey, *Limits to Capital*; Lefebvre, *Production of Space*. Herod's most cogent statement is "From a Geography of Labor"; an agenda-setting collection is Herod, *Organizing the Landscape*; his fullest statement is *Labor Geographies*.

4. Herod, *Labor Geographies*, 1, 5, 46, 48. An excellent review of the literature in labor geography is Lier, "Places of Work"; see also Castree, "Labour Geography"; the field now has its own textbook: Castree, Coe, Ward, and Sammers, *Spaces of Work*.

5. David Harvey, "On the History and Present Condition of Geography: An Historical Materialist Manifesto" (essay originally published in 1984), reprinted in *Spaces of Capital*, 116.

CHAPTER 6 *Imperial Farming, Imperialist Landscapes*

Epigraphs are from Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 11; Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 55.

1. Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 35–37. A devastating portrait of shacktowns in the state is painted in an untitled report by the DoH, dated June 15, 1950, Warren Papers, DIR, DoH, File 2299.

2. Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 21–29.

3. Ibid., 46–47.

4. Ibid., 40–46, 52–54.

5. Ibid., 53–55.

6. Ibid., 29, 32–33.

7. Small to Scharrenberg, October 15, 1951; "Report on Meeting of the Commission of Housing Held on September 18, 1951"; Haslett to Small, September 18, 1951, all in Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2300; Small to Warren, March 5, 1951, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1219; Edward F. Hayes, "Joint Planning Eased Labor Problem in 1951," *Fresno Bee*, December 30, 1951, 10–E; Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, table 30, 99.

8. Andrés, "Power and Control," 128–40. For the decisive role that Chinese farmers played in developing agriculture in other parts of the state, see Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*; Henderson, "Romancing the Sand" and *California*, chap. 6; the "most abundant" line is quoted in "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers, May–June 1951," probably by Galarza, Galarza Papers, Box 45, File 3. For a general, compelling, wonderfully idiosyncratic account of the Imperial's development (and its ongoing life), see Vollman, *Imperial*.

9. "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 1–2; Andrés, "Power and Control," 158.

10. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 43; "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 1, wherein is also found the second quotation, which is cited as being from "Niland's Ninth Annual Tomato Festival—1949—p. 6."

11. The ten thousand figure is from Hasiwar and Galarza, "Operations of the National Farm Labor Union—AFL—in the Imperial Valley—February–May, 1951," 3; the five thousand figure is from "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 2, both in Galarza Papers, Box 45, File 3; Small to Warren, March 5, 1951, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1219.

12. Hasiwar and Galarza, "Operations of the National Farm Labor Union—AFL—in the Imperial Valley—February–May, 1951," 4, Galarza Papers, Box 45, File 3. For more on the complex relationship that developed between Galarza and *Alianza*, see Loza, "*Alianza de Braceros Nacionales*"; on the transnational nature of the laboring class, see Cohen, *Braceros*.

13. Gladwin Hill, "Peons in the West Lowering Culture: Illegal Migrants from Mexico Form Vast Unassimilable Block of Population," *New York Times*, March 27, 1951, 31; "Report of the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 4.

14. "Report of the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 4–5; Holliday, "Study of Non-attendance," 8, cited in Andrés, "Power and Control," 212, see also 213; for shacktowns in the San Joaquin, see the various hearings, Governor's Committee, *Agricultural Labor in the San Joaquin Valley*, 211–18. In one survey of substandard housing in the San Joaquin Valley, Mexicans occupied 30 percent of the structures, a proportion far in excess of their population in the Valley (table 8, 218); see also DoH, untitled report, June 15, 1950, Warren Papers, DIR/DIH, File 2299.

15. Rugg's report quoted in Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 107; 1934 conditions quoted in Andrés, "Power and Control," 214; descriptions of the FSA camps can be found in ibid., 240–42.

16. The University of Texas report is quoted in Gladwin Hill, "Peons Net Farm Fabulous Profit: Illegal Migrants from Mexico Working Rich Soil of West a Bonanza to Exploiters," *New York Times*, March 26, 1951, 25; Sánchez is quoted in Hill, "Peons in the West," 31; descriptions of undocumented worker housing from Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 151.

17. Hasiwar to Warren, May 11, 1951; Ernesto to Mitchell, May 8, 1951, both in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5; Hasiwar and Galarza, "Operations of the National Farm Labor Union—AFL—in the Imperial Valley—February–May, 1951," 3, Galarza Papers, Box 45, File 3.

18. "Operations of the National Farm Labor Union," 2, 7; Galarza to Tobin, February 8, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 13.

19. Galarza, "National Farm Union—Confidential Report on Imperial Valley Developments, March 12, 1951," Galarza Papers, Box 45, File 3; "An O'Dwyer Accused of Hiring 'Wetbacks,'" *New York Times*, February 14, 1951, 24; Lawrence Davies, "'Tough' Plan Seeks to Ban 'Wetbacks': Federal Notice is Sent to Far West Farms to Stop Hiring Mexican Border-Runners," *New York Times*, May 2, 1951, 47.

20. Mets and O'Dwyer quoted in "Mexican Wetbacks Hired to Save Imperiled Crops," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, February 15, 1951, 6; Mitchell to Edwards, April 10, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6; "'Wetback' Hearing Held: O'Dwyer's Brother Accused of Hiring Mexicans Illegally," *New York Times*, February 28, 1951, 5; Brockway to Galarza, March 13, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5 (copy also in Box 23, File 1); Brockway to Hasiwar, March 13, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 1.

21. Galarza to Brockway, March 17, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5 (copy also in Box 23, File 1); Hasiwar to Brockway, March 16, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 1; Brockway to Hasiwar, March 22, 1951; Brockway to Galarza, March 21, 1951, both in Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 1; Mitchell to Edwards, April 10, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6; Hasiwar and Galarza, "The Present Situation in the Imperial Valley: Confidential," April 15, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 45, File 3; Mitchell to Galarza, Hasiwar, and Lara, April 19, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5.

22. Davies, "'Tough' Plan," 47; "Warn Farmers to Stop Using 'Wetback' Labor," *Hayward Daily Review*, May 2, 1951, 3; "Farmers Warned on Hiring Aliens," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, May 2, 1951, A3; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 434–36; Gladwin Hill, "Farmers Punished in 'Wetback' Drive: Some Permits to Use Mexicans Voided in 'Get-Tough' Action by U.S. in Southwest," *New York Times*, May 27, 1951, 37; Ernesto to Mitch, May 8, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5.

23. Galarza to Al, May 18, 1951, Galarza Paper, Box 44, File 5; "Walkout of Imperial Valley Farm Workers Perils Crops," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, May 24, 1951; Hasiwar to Warren, telegram, n.d.; Hasiwar to Edward Brown (attorney general), telegram, n.d.; Hasiwar to Vickers, telegram, n.d., all in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5; Mitchell, "The Wetback Strike" (memorandum for information only), n.d., Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 7; "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers, May–June 1951," 10–13, 30–31, Galarza Papers, Box 45, File 3; "A.F.L. Backs Protest Against 'Wetbacks,'" *New York Times*, May 28, 1951, 15; "AFL Backs Farm Tieup at El Centro," *Long Beach Independent*, May 28, 1951; Hasiwar to Mitchell, telegram, n.d., Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5; "Imperial Valley Strike Proceeds," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, May 25, 1951, A-2; Galarza to Carey (CIO), telegram, n.d.; Galarza to Cannon, n.d.; Hasiwar and Galarza to Brother Secretary, May 25, 1951, all in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5.

24. Hank to Galarza, telegram, n.d.; Hasiwar to Gonzalez, n.d., both in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5; "'Wetbacks' Taken Deep into Mexico in New Airlift," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, June 2, 1951, 1; Joint Interpretation quoted in "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers, May–June, 1951," 22–23; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 436–38; "Tobin Bans Mexicans as Strike-Breakers Against Farm Union in California," *New York Times*, June 9, 1951, 36; "Tobin Orders Strikebound Mexicans Home," *Hayward Daily Review*, June 9, 1951, 6; Mitch to Hasiwar, telegram, June 9, 1951; Anonymous to Tobin, telegram, n.d.; Hasiwar to Mitchell, telegram, n.d.; Galarza to Mitchell, telegram, n.d., all in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 164.

25. Norton to NFLU, May 29, 1951, quoted in Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 164–65, see also 169–70; Mitch to Hasiwar, telegram, June 9, 1951, quoting wire from Tobin to Mitchell, June 9, 1951; Hank to Mitch, June 8, 1951; Mitchell to Larin, June 11, 1951; Mitchell to Hasiwar, telegram, June 13, 1951; Mitch to Hasiwar, June 15, 1951; Hasiwar and Galarza to Mr. Secretary, June 18, 1951, all in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5; "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 24–25.

26. Scruggs, *Braceros*, 438; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 170; "Farm Union Suspends West Coast Strike," *New York Times*, June 26, 1951, 24.

27. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 167.

28. Hasiwar to Mitchell, telegram, n.d.; Hasiwar to Kroeger, May 25, 1951; Hasiwar to Scharrenberg, telegram, n.d.; Kroeger to Hasiwar, n.d.; Galarza to Scharrenberg, June 12, 1951, all in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5; "Union Lays Attack to 'Wetback Driver,'" *New York Times*, May 31, 1951; "Report on the Strike of the Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 19.

29. "A.F.L. Backs Protest Against 'Wetbacks,'" *New York Times*, May 28, 1951, 15; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 437; "Strikers on Coast Arrest 'Wetbacks,'" *New York Times*, June 1,

1951; "Report on the Strike of Imperial Valley Farm Workers," 18, 22; "19 Unionists Seized in Imperial Strike," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, June 4, 1951; "Kidnapping Charged in Wetback Round-Up," *New York Times*, June 4, 1951, 21; "Union Pickets Mexican Consulate in 'Wetback' Row," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, June 7, 1951, 8.

30. "Fruit Shipments Slump," *New York Times*, June 6, 1951, 48; Mitchell to Galvin [probably June 25, 1951], Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 5; "Farm Union Suspends West Coast Strike," *New York Times*, June 26, 1951, 24; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 438; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 170.

31. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 43; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 70–71; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 72–73; Hawley, "Politics of the Mexican Labor Issue," esp. 160; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 443–44.

32. "House Delays Bill on Mexican Labor: Move is Made for Acceptance of Amended Version of Senate Plan for Importing Workers," *New York Times*, June 27, 1951, 30; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 450–51; "Truman Gets Bill on Mexican Labor: Congress Acts on Program as Agreement on Relief Hiring Comes to an End," *New York Times*, July 1, 1951, 21; Harry S. Truman, "Special Message to the Congress on the Employment of Agricultural Workers from Mexico," July 13, 1951, copy in Galarza Papers, Box 24, File 6; electronic copy available at The American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13879) (accessed May 11, 2009); Calavita, *Inside the State*, 43.

33. Hawley, "Politics of the Mexican Labor Issue," 160; Truman, "Special Message to Congress," July 13, 1951.

34. Truman, "Special Message"; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 442, 444–45; Hawley, "Politics of the Mexican Labor Issue," 159n8.

35. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 44; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 72–74; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 72–73. The international agreement was also called the Migrant Labor Agreement. A copy of the 1951 agreement, as amended, is included as appendix G, exhibit 2, in California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 271–80; a copy of the standard work contract is appendix G, exhibit 6, in ibid., 287–92; the major provisions of the 1951 agreements are usefully enumerated in Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 10–12.

36. Scruggs, *Braceros*, 456–57; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 74–76; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 78–81. The provisions of the standard work contract are enumerated in Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 12–13.

37. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 78; Calavita, *Inside the State*, 44.

38. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 85.

39. Small to Haslet, February 15, 1952, Warren Papers, Employment, File 1222. No comparable data on the cost of hiring and housing a domestic worker are available.

40. "Tomato Workers Wages Up at Meet," *San Mateo Times*, August 18, 1951, 12; "Tomato, Cotton Harvests to Set Record," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, September 3, 1951, B12; "Output Doubled at Hunt Foods," *Hayward Daily Review*, September 25, 1951, 4B; "Right Weather for Tomatoes May Give California Growers $50,000,000 Crop," *Long Beach Press-*

Telegram, September 27, 1951, A15; "The New Farm Worker U.S.A.: Report of the National Executive Board to the 17th Convention of the National Farm Labor Union, Memphis, Tennessee, December 8, 9, 1951," 7, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 5; Gladwin Hill, "Tomato Crop Peril Seen in Pay Limit: Farm Union Told that Ceiling is So Low It May Repel California Harvest Crews," *New York Times*, September 15, 1951, 6; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 143–44; "AFL Resolution Condemns Use of 'Wetbacks' In Farm Labor," *Hayward Daily Review*, September 17, 1951, 10; "Higher Cotton, Tomato Picking Wages Asked," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, September 19, 1951, 12; on canning tomato prices in the 1950s, see Runsten and LeVeen, *Mechanization and Mexican Labor*, table 5.1, 101.

41. "New Farm Worker U.S.A.," 7; "300 Mexicans Aid Tomato Harvest," *Hayward Daily Review*, September 11, 1951, 4; Bryant is quoted in the *Fresno Bee*, September 1, 1951, which is cited in National Agricultural Workers Union, "Statement on the Operation and Effects of the International Executive Agreement of 1951 for the Recruitment and Employment of Mexican Nationals in Agriculture in the U.S." (ca. 1952), 3, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 8; Hayes is quoted in "Mexican Farm Laborers Are Coming In at 1000 Per Day," *Redwood Journal-Press-Dispatch*, September 21, 1951, 3.

42. de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, table 4.2, 59; Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, table 54, 222.

SQUEEZED

1. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 264–65; Henderson, *California*; "Mexican Farm Labor Program: Consultants Report," October 1959, in California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1, appendix G, exhibit 12, 304–9.

2. Henderson, *California*, 75–76, quoting Chenowith, "Long Term Agricultural Credit." A brilliant analysis of how the mantle of proletarian identity is taken on by petty producers faced by the overwhelming power of the banks and processing companies is made by Geoff Mann in a chapter on Northern California fishers in *Our Daily Bread*.

3. The best explanation of this process, and especially its geographical ramifications, remains Harvey, *Limits to Capital*.

4. The starting point for contemporary labor process theory is Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. The labor process in the California strawberry industry is compellingly scrutinized in Wells, *Strawberry Fields*, quotation from 11.

5. Wells, *Strawberry Fields*; Thomas, *Citizenship, Gender, and Work*; Mize, "Mexican Contract Workers."

CHAPTER 7 *Labor Process, Laboring Life*

Epigraphs are from Finney to Galarza, July 7, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8; Tobin to King, n.d. [probably July 1952], Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 3; Park to Hayes, February 18, 1954, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

1. "Lettuce Crop Now Crated in Fields: Newly Developed Machine Can Pack Full

Carload in Hour, Speeding Up Harvest," *Los Angeles Times*, December 4, 1949, 23. An excellent description of the labor process in a lettuce-packing plant is given in "Lettuce Packing Season Begins: 2,800 Acres Near Oxnard Drawn Upon," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 15, 1952, 1.

2. Petrick, "'Like Ribbons of Green and Gold,'" 280; Chanin Glass, "Organization in Salina." Despite its subtitle, this article spends most of its time detailing the decline of unions in the packinghouses, and thus the overall decline of wages in the industry, attendant upon the introduction of vacuum cooling. Only one example of unionization of field workers—the famous Bud Antle sweetheart contract with the Teamsters—is discussed.

3. Hayes to Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Carter, October 28, 1953, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

4. Petrick, "'Like Ribbons of Green and Gold,'" 282; California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 103, figures 62 and 63; Chanin Glass, "Organization in Salinas," 26; Braun to Rucker, November 5, 1953; Hayes to Coffman, June 22, 1954, both in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

5. Chanin Glass, "Organization in Salinas," 26.

6. Raffetto quoted in Petrick, "'Like Ribbons of Green and Gold,'" 283; Park to Hayes, February 18, 1954, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

7. State of California, Department of Employment, press release, August 6, 1954; Synon to Martin, August 16, 1954, both in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9; Chanin Glass, "Organization in Salinas," 26. On the new skills needed for the field pack, see Thomas, *Citizenship, Gender, and Work*.

8. State of California, Department of Employment, press releases, August 6, and August 13, 1954; clipping, "Union Hails Ruling on Lettuce Labor," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 14, 1954, all in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9; "State Board Will Review Job Crisis in Lettuce Fields," *Fresno Bee*, August 13, 1954, 9A; "Ruling on Lettuce Workers," *Oakland Tribune*, August 13, 1954, 2D.

9. James Collins, "He Glamorized the Carrot," *Ghost Town News*, June 1942, 8 (published by Knott's Berry Place and available at http://www.scribd.com/doc/7457670/Ghost-Town-News-v1n5-June-1942, accessed May 15, 2009); Synon to Martin, August 16, 1954; Burkett to Harris, August 19, 1954, both in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

10. Clipping, "Union Hails Ruling on Lettuce Labor," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 14, 1954, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9; E. G. to Mitch and Pat, June 3, 1954, p. 1, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 8; Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives*, 117.

11. E. G. to Mitch and Pat, June 3, 1954, p. 2, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 8.

12. For a thorough description of the labor process, see NAWU, "Statement Submitted to the Deputy Labor Commissioner William J. Walls, for Hearing on the Matter of Illegal Deductions from Wages of Carrot Tiers for Tie-Wires in the Salinas Valley," October 17, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 4 (esp. pp. 1–2). A brief description of the issues and the pressures that brought the case to settlement is given in Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 212–14.

13. Galarza to Finney, April 29, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 8.

14. NAWU, "Statement Submitted to the Deputy Labor Commissioner," 1, 3–5. NAWU based its estimates on a study of check stubs; it was never able to get access to company books to understand how actual charges were made or what the actual amounts charged were.

15. Tobin to King, n.d. [July 1952]; Galarza to Comeros, August 27, 1952, both in Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 3.

16. "Migrant Labor Agreement of 1951, as Amended," reprinted as appendix G, exhibit 2, in California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 271–80, quotation from 271–72; Galarza to Comeros, August 27, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 3; Mitchell to Goodwin, October 6, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 2; NAWU, "Statement Submitted to Deputy Labor Commissioner."

17. Robert Le Phohn to Mr. Polland, October 16, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 3; "Statement Submitted to Deputy Labor Commissioner," 7. I have not been able to track down Mr. Polland and so cannot determine if this analysis was commissioned by a grower, the union, a government employee, or some other party. Le Prohn later became an administrative law judge and arbitrator who decided a number of significant NLRB cases during the United Farm Workers (UFW) era.

18. Goodwin to Mitchell, October 15, 1952; Brockway to Galarza, November 7, 1952, both in Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 2; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 213.

19. Tobin to King, n.d. [July 1952], Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 3; "Associated Farmers Spokesman Brands Union 'Twistem' Wire Charge Ridiculous," *Salinas Californian*, October 24, 1952; "Supplementary Statement Number 2 Submitted by the National Agricultural Workers Union AFL in the Matter of Illegal Deductions from Wages of Carrot Tiers for Twistems," February 10, 1953, 2, 1; "Supplementary Statement of the National Agricultural Workers Union-AFL with Respect to Deductions from Wages of Carrot Tiers for the Use of Tie-Wires (Twistems) in Contravention of Article 450 of the State Labor Code," December 5, 1952, all in Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 4; "Statement Submitted to Deputy Labor Commissioner," 4. See Galarza, "Report on Trip to Contracting Center for Mexican contract Nationals at Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico," Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 11 (to be discussed more fully below).

20. Supplementary Statement," December 5, 1952, 1, 5.

21. Ibid., 3–4; "Supplementary Statement Number 2," February 10, 1953, 3–4, 6.

22. Oliver (assistant labor commissioner) to Galarza, February 9, 1953; Mitchell to all local officers and organizers, NAWU, California, April 30, 1953, both in Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 3; Murray to Galarza, May 1, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 43, File 3; "Mexicans Can't Be Charged for Tying Materials," *Imperial Valley Press*, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 8; "U.S. and Mexico Bar 'Twistem' Charges," *New York Times*, May 1, 1953, 36; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 213. An explicit ban on deductions or charges for twistems in carrot tying (except when subject to negligent destruction or loss) was incorporated into the standard work contract through a Joint Interpretation issued by Mexico

and the United States in August 1954; "Standard Work Contract," *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1, appendix G, exhibit 6, 288–89.

23. "U.S. and Mexico Bar 'Twistem' Charges," *New York Times*, May 1, 1953, 36; Mitchell to all local officers and organizers, NAWU, California, April 30, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 3; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 214.

24. "Supplementary Statement Number 2," February 10, 1953, 6.

25. "Associated Farmers Spokesman Brands Union 'Twistem' Wire Charge Ridiculous," October 24, 1952, *Salinas Californian*, Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 4.

26. "Mexican Laborers: Worker Complains to Ambassador of Bad Treatment, Withheld Pay," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 11, 1952, Taylor Papers, Carton 39, File 22; Goodwin to Mitchell, October 15, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 2. A brief description of this trip can also be found in Pitti, "Ernesto Galarza," esp. 180, as well as in Cohen, *Braceros*.

27. Figures calculated from Goodwin to Mitchell, October 15, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 2; a summary of the data in this letter is also available as "Summary of Statements of Mexican Contract Workers Covering Housing, Food, Wages, Salinas, California, Area," n.d., Galarza Papers, Box 19, File 2. Investigators could not secure low-wage data for 24, or high-wage data for 20, of the 181 braceros.

28. Brockway to Galarza, November 7, 1952; Galarza to Goodwin, October 6, 1952, both in Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 2. Galarza apparently reported the wrong dates for Cano Hernandez's return to Salinas, muddying the waters a bit, and certainly undermining his case with Brockway. Then again, Brockway in his return letter of November 7 got some dates wrong himself, such as the date of Galarza's complaint to Goodwin.

29. Brockway to Galarza, November 7, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 2. Transfers were governed by Article 27 of the Migrant Labor Agreement, which in fact was silent about transfers *within* a labor supply association.

30. Brockway to Galarza, November 7, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 2.

31. "Migrant Labor Agreement of 1951, as Amended," in California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1, appendix G, exhibit 2, 277; see also Mashburn (undersecretary of labor) to William Knowlton (senator), May 20, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 27, File 5.

32. Galarza, "Report on Trip to Contracting Center for Mexican Contract Nationals at Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico," April 22, 1951, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 11; Gladwin Hill, "Hiring Brings Grief to Mexican Cities: Three Principal Towns Facing Disruption as Seekers for U.S. Jobs Pour In," *New York Times*, April 24, 1951, 24; Hill, "Men Seeking Jobs," 26.

33. Galarza, "Report on Trip," 6, 9; Hill, "Hiring Brings Grief," 24; and Hill, "Men Seeking Jobs," 26.

34. Hill, "Men Seeking Jobs," 26; Hill, "Hiring Brings Grief," 22. Riots and protests continued throughout the spring. "Mexicans Clash Over Jobs in U.S.: 1,000 in Angry Demonstration at Monterrey Charge New Arrivals Get Preference," *New York Times*, May 21, 1951, 35; William Carney, "Mexico Bars Migrant Rail Travel Toward North as 3

Cities Ask Aid: 30,000 Seeing Farm Jobs in U.S. Pose Major Problem—Hiring Offices Now Closed—Placement Agents Warned," *New York Times*, April 26, 1951, 8.

35. Galarza, "Report on Trip," 5, 3; Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* chap. 2.

36. Figures calculated from data in Goodwin to Mitchell, October 15, 1952, p. 2. For a sense of the real degree of dissatisfaction with food in the camps, see the detailed descriptions and analysis in Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, chap. 7; as well as chap. 7 of Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*; see also Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 187–89.

37. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 164; Ernesto to Mitch, May 26, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6. The 1949 international agreement, which was in effect at the time of the Imperial strike, contained language almost identical to that of Article 21 of the 1951 agreement, which came into effect a few months later.

38. Galarza to Green, June 2, 1952; Mitchell to Galvin (undersecretary of labor), June 3, 1952; Galarza to Schullman, April 18, 1952; Galarza to Charley (Busick), May 6, 1952; Galarza to Charley, May 16, 1952; Galarza to Shelly, April 18, 1952; Shelley to Galarza, April 30, 1952; Galarza to Shelly, May 8, 1952; Mitchell to Hon. Chet Holifield, telegram, May 27, 1952, all in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 6; notes by H. H. and H. L. M. (Hasiwar and Mitchell), "Imperial Valley—Spring 1952," Galarza Papers, Box 45, File 1; Busick to Galarza, May 21, 1952; Galarza to Charley, May 27, 1952, both in Galarza Papers, Box 43, File 3; [Galarza] to Mitch, June 10, 1952; [Galarza] to Mitch, June 11, 1952; [Galarza] to Mitch, June 16, 1952; Ernesto to Mitch, June 23, 1952, all in Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6.

39. Galarza to Scharrenberg, May 29, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 6; Galarza to Henry, August 8, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 4; Galarza to Goodwin, October 6, 1952, Galarza Papers, Box 23, File 2. See also D'Arrigo Bros. Co. of California, payroll, Brawley, Calif., stub for C. O. Lopez, May 7, 1952 (back), Galarza Papers, Box 19, File 3; "Notes—3 Ntl—Manteca—Juan Lucio Camp (Tracy)," October 14, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6; Murray to Brockway, May 14, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 2. This letter details the injuries and their aftermath of twenty-seven braceros who were hurt when the truck they were riding in crashed in the Imperial. See also Jim to Ernie, May 15, 1953; Jim to Ernie, May 16, 1953, both in Galarza Papers, Box 43, File 3; Murray to Harrington, May 16, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 7; Jim to Ernie, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 2; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 177; Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 58. Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 4, contains numerous letters and reports detailing on-the-job accidents, including numerous letters from braceros who were injured at, or in transit to or from, work. For another large compendium of abuses in the braceros medical system amassed by nonunion parties, see Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 1.

40. Becker to Friend, May 17, 1953; [Galarza] to Jim, May 15, 1953, both in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 2.

41. Huxley to Murray, May 18, 1952; Murray to Huxley, May 19, 1953; Murray to Galarza and Becker, May 19, 1953; Brockway to Murray, June 12, 1953, all in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 2.

42. Brockway to Murray, June 12, 1953; "Comments on Letter of Glenn E. Brockway . . .

in Relation to the Deportation of Contract Nationals . . . Members of the National Agricultural Workers Union," June 17, 1953, both in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 2; see also Murray to Durkin, August 25, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 13.

43. Murray to Durkin, August 25, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 13; [Galarza] to Warren, August 28, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 8.

44. [Galarza] to Warren, August 28, 1953; Murray to Pollitt, September 8, 1953; Jim to Galarza, September 25, 1953, all in Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 8.

45. Jim to Galarza, September 25, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 8; on the growing labor agitation against undocumented migrants, see, for example, "The Wetback Menace," *Teamster Magazine*, March 1954.

46. Agricultural Producers Labor Committee *News Letter*, November 5, 1952, 2, Vizzard Papers, Box 30, File 8; Shelley to Galarza, March 13, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 6.

47. Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 141–42.

WETBACK

1. Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, and Clarke, *Policing the Crisis*, 394; Geoff Mann, *Our Daily Bread*, 9, 10, 155; Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings"; Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*. I am indebted to Jim Glassman for some timely reminders of both how to understand these couplings, and the coupling of the key literatures: "Critical Geography II."

2. Street, *Beasts of the Field*, 104; Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 108, 134.

3. Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 167; Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 64; Saxton, *Indispensible Enemy*.

4. Alamaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, chap. 7; Street, *Beast of the Field*, chap. 18; Daniels, *Politics of Prejudice*; Van Nuys, "Progressive Confronts the Race Question."

5. Edward Brown, "Labor Camp Sanitation and Housing in California: A History of Progress from 1913–1922," DIR Records, Carton 19, File: "Immigration"; Dr. Charles L. Bennett, *Housing for Field Employees* (n.p., n.d.), DIR Records, Carton 59, File "Housing for Field Employees"; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 100–102.

6. Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 127.

7. Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?*; Kelley quoted in Scruggs, *Braceros*, 299.

8. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 55.

CHAPTER 8 *Operation Wetback*

Epigraphs are from press release, Department of Justice, June 9, 1954, Galarza Papers, Box 50, File 1; Harris to McDonough, September 7, 1954, Knight Papers, Series 92, Box 32, File 7.

1. Press release, Department of Justice, June 9, 1954, Galarza Papers, Box 50, File 1;

"Wetback Patrol to Be Stepped Up: 500 Officers to Augment Unit of 256 on Mexico Border to Halt Alien Influx," *New York Times*, June 10, 1954, 25; "U.S. Spreads Net for 'Wetbacks': 500 Immigration Officials Set to Round Up Illegal Mexican Farm Workers," *New York Times*, June 13, 1954, 24; Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Droves Fleeing to Border: Big U.S. Dragnet on Today to Rid Southern California of Mexican Migrants," *New York Times*, June 17, 1954, 29; Gladwin Hill, "700 on Coast to Open 'Wetback' Drive: Mobile Task Forces Round Up Border Jumpers in Test of New Federal Strategy," *New York Times*, June 18, 1954, 14; Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Stream Stemmed in Part: Federal Men Think They Have Border-Jumping in Hand by Patrol System," *New York Times*, June 20, 1954, 75; "'Wetback' Drive Shifts: Texas Next Goal After Arizona and California Campaign," *New York Times*, July 3, 1954, 11; Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Purge to Shift to Texas: California Sector Considered Fairly Well Cleaned Up—55,000 Seized in June," *New York Times*, July 5, 1954, 11. The standard history of Operation Wetback remains García, *Operation Wetback*.

2. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee of Agriculture and Forestry, *Extension of the Mexican Farm Labor Program: Hearings on S. 1207*, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, March 23–24, 1953 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953), 23, quoted in Craig, *Bracero Program*, 103; see also García, *Operation Wetback*, 81.

3. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 66–67; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 105–6; García, *Operation Wetback*, 81, citing *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 1953, 8.

4. Craig, *Bracero Program*, 104, 109; Sydney Gruson, "Mexico Reassures U.S. on Farm Labor: Won't Halt Recruiting Should New Pact on Migrants Be Delayed Until After Jan. 1," *New York Times*, December 22, 1953, 22; "Mexican Labor Pact is Extended 15 Days," *New York Times*, January 1, 1954, 10; "U.S. Sets Program on Mexican Labor: Stop-Gap Plan is Announced as Two Governments Fail to Reach Agreement," *New York Times*, January 16, 1954, 15; "Mexico Shuts Off Migrant Entries: Acts as Pact for Farm Workers in U.S. Ends, but the Effect is Doubted in Washington," *New York Times*, January 17, 1954, 62; "Wetback Ban Hits State Farms Blow," *San Mateo Times*, January 16, 1954, 1.

5. "Mexicali Has Riot as Police Close Border," *Long Beach Independent-Press-Telegram*, January 24, 1954, 1; "Braceros Riot at the Border," *New York Times*, January 24, 1954, 10. The photograph accompanies "Policy Shift Traps Mexican Farm Workers," *Los Angeles Times*, January 26, 1954, 1; it is mentioned (but not cited) in *Hispanic American Report* 7 (February 1954), foreword (n.p.), which in turn provides the basis for the discussion in Craig, *Bracero Program*, 113; Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 155.

6. Craig, *Bracero Program*, 112; "Mexicali has Riot as Police Close Border," *Long Beach Independent-Press-Telegram*, January 24, 1954, 1; "Braceros Riot at the Border," *New York Times*, January 24, 1954, 10; "Border Prepares Against Riots," *Modesto Bee*, January 28, 1954, 9; "Border Guards Ready for New Laborer's Charge," *Redlands Daily Facts*, January 29, 1954, 5; "Mexican Labor Guard on Alert," *San Mateo Times*, January 28, 1954, 22; "Farm Hands Cluster at Mexico Line," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, January 29, 1954, A3; "Hungry Mexicans Refuse to Quit Border Position," *Modesto Bee*, January 29, 1954, 7; "U.S. Shuts Off Wetback Flow," *Long Beach Independent*, January 29, 1954, 14; "Mexi-

cans Seeking U.S. Farm Jobs Bill at Border Point," *New York Times*, January 29, 1954, 7; "Mexican Laborers Mob Border Gates: Fights Break Out," *Redlands Daily Facts*, February 1, 1954, 1; "7500 Braceros 'Slug It Out' for 500 Jobs," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, February 1, 1954, A3; "Fights Flare as Mexicans Seek Work," *Modesto Bee*, February 1, 1954, 6; "Thousands of Mexican Farm Workers Battle to Cross U.S. Boundary," *New York Times*, February 2, 1954, 3; *Imperial Valley Press* quoted in Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 66.

7. Craig, *Bracero Program*, 113; García, *Operation Wetback*, 89; Wesley Peyton, "Bracero 'Hiring Halls' Face Shutdown, Labor Man Says," *Long Beach Independent*, February 4, 1954, 6; "Crop Loss Feared in Braceros Jam: Action by Congress Urged for an Emergency Pact on Hiring Mexican Labor," *New York Times*, February 6, 1954, 20; García, *Operation Wetback*, 84; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 68; Scruggs, *Braceros*, 486–87. For a more general account of the imperialist economic relation between the United States and Mexico, see Gonzales, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?*

8. The story of the girl pushed into the path of a train is reported in "U.S. Shuts Off Wetback Flow," *Long Beach Independent*, January 29, 1954, 14; on official attitudes in State, Justice, and Labor, see the comments of Congressman John F. Shelley, *Congressional Record*, 83rd Congress, 2nd Session, 100, part 1 (February 4, 1954), "Extension of Remarks," p. 1387, quoted in García, *Operation Wetback*, 85.

9. "Crop Loss Feared in Braceros Jam: Action by Congress is Urged for an Emergency Pact on Hiring Mexican Labor," *New York Times*, February 6, 1954, 20; "Committee Votes Migrant Measure: U.S. Recruitment of Mexican Labor Without Consent of Mexico Approved," *New York Times*, February 13, 1954, 8; "Power to Recruit Mexicans is Voted: Bill Authorizing the Admission of Migrant Labor Goes to White House," *New York Times*, March 4, 1954, 18; Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1, appendix G, exhibit 1, 269; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 114; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 69; García, *Operation Wetback*, 89, 93.

10. García, *Operation Wetback*, 95; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 69.

11. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 69.

12. Ibid., 59, 70; numbers from Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State*, appendix A, 217. Drawing on the same sources (INS annual reports) slightly, but not significantly, different numbers (e.g., four thousand more in 1953, forty thousand fewer in 1954) are given in Hadley, "Critical Analysis of the Wetback Problem," 334. Hadley discusses the inherent difficulties with the data in her footnote 1; see also Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, table 4.1, 157; Gladwin Hill, "Two Every Minute Cross the Border: Mexican 'Wetbacks' Continue to Invade the United States in an Unending—and Uncontrolled—Stream," *New York Times Magazine*, January 31, 1954, SM13, 41–42, quotations from 13; the drowning deaths are described in García, *Operation Wetback*, 144. Further descriptions of what she calls the "lethality of the border landscape" at the time can be found in Hernández, "Crimes and Consequences," esp. 440.

13. "The Wetback Menace," *Teamster Magazine*, March 1954, 4–14, quotations from 4, 6, 7; "'Wetbacks' Called A Major Problem: Brownell Seeks Plan to Curb Influx and

Crime—He also Cites Danger of Subversion," *New York Times*, August 17, 1953, 11; Anthony Leviero, "Eisenhower Backs 'Wetbacks' Drive: Brownell Presents at Denver His U.S.-State Plan to Halt Illegal Influx of Mexicans," *New York Times*, August 18, 1953, 16; Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Problem is Attacked Anew: Federal Administration Plans Some Positive Action and Mexican Army is Helping," *New York Times*, August 30, 1953, E7; "Reds Slip Into U.S. Congress Warned: Immigration Service Says 100 Present, Ex-Members Sneak In Daily from Mexico," *New York Times*, February 10, 1954, 23.

14. "Brownell Speeds Study of 'Wetbacks' Problem," *New York Times*, August 1, 1953, 9; "Brownell Maps Trip for 'Wetback' Study," *New York Times*, August 8, 1953, 13; "'Wetbacks' Called a Major Problem: Brownell Seeks Plan to Curb Influx and Crime—He Also Cites Danger of Subversion," *New York Times*, August 17, 1953, 11; Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Problem is Attacked Anew: Federal Administration Plans Some Positive Action and Mexican Army is Helping," *New York Times*, August 30, 1953, E7.

15. "Patrol Increased to Stop 'Wetbacks': 200 Border Men to Join 300 on 1,500 Miles of Mexico Line After Survey by Brownell," *New York Times*, September 5, 1953, 3; "California Seeks More 'Wetbacks': Labor Shortage is Threatened, Nixon Asked to Help Ease Curbs, Newspaper Says," *New York Times*, September 7, 1953, 1; "Farmers Defend 'Wetback' Record: Say Influx Is a 'Minor Phase' of Alien Problem Affecting Industry and Commerce," *New York Times*, September 26, 1954, 9; Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Traffic Again Sets Record: 105,529 Persons Intercepted in August—Farmers Balk at Federal Drive," *New York Times*, September 16, 1954, 21; Kelly quoted in García, *Operation Wetback*, 119, see also 126–31.

16. California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1, appendix G, exhibit 1, 269; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 61, 76. It seems that after 1953 Department of Employment policy required that it start counting undocumented workers as part of the local labor supply, but there is no evidence that it ever really did so. See National Agricultural Workers Union, "The Use of Mexican Nationals and Its Effects on the Employment of Domestic Agricultural Workers in the Imperial Valley of California," August 1953, p. 25, Galarza Papers, Box 9, File 10.

17. Edward F. Hayes, *Hearings*, House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Labor Standards, *Extension of Coverage of the Fair Labor Standards Act*, part 2, 85th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C., 1958), 2401, quoted in Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 129. A good discussion of the basically chaotic nature of labor-need estimation is California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 96–97. An outline of how need is *supposed* to be determined is presented in "Report of the Committee on Farm Placement of the Federal Advisory Council: The Mexican Farm Labor Program," May 12, 1954, Galarza Papers, Box 27, File 4; see also Hayes to Mr. and Mrs. Clyde, October 8, 1953; Park to Hayes, February 18, 1954, both in Knight Papers, Series 92, Box 10, File 9; the analogy with Displaced Persons is made by former President's Commission staff member Elizabeth Hadley, "Critical Analysis of the Wetback Problem," 345.

18. Blayney to Knight, telegram, May 16, 1954; Fresno County Farm Bureau to Knight,

telegram, May 17, 1954, both in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9. Identical telegrams were sent a month later to the INS; García, *Operation Wetback*, 163–67, 185–87; Hawley, "Politics of the Mexican Labor Issue."

19. García, *Operation Wetback*, 159–60.

20. Ibid., 169–71, 172–73, 229. See Calavita, *Inside the State*, 52 and 103–4, where she examines some of the difficulties Swing encountered from Congress—including charges that he was seeking to "militarize" the Border Patrol—when he sought to hire retired generals as consultants. Craig, *Bracero Program*, 128.

21. García, *Operation Wetback*, 175, 178; 184, 187; Swing testimony, U.S. Congress, Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations (1954), p. 215, quoted in Calavita, *Inside the State*, 53; Edward F. Hayes, "'Operation Wetback,'" 17. See also, "Wetback Drive Hikes Labor Calls," *Long Beach Independent*, July 15, 1954, 26; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 69.

22. García, *Operation Wetback*, 177, 183–84, 192, 228; Calavita, *Inside the State*, 54; Gladwin Hill, "Plan Gains to End Use of 'Wetbacks,' Farmers Reported Concurring in Program to Supply Them with More Legal Workers," *New York Times*, June 27, 1954, 36; Kelly Lytle Hernández is correct to note there was a long history—binational in scope—to Operation Wetback, including other concerted deportation drives, and that the main difference from earlier operations was that this one was at root as much a U.S. publicity campaign as anything, but in doing so, she underplays the importance of the political shift the 1954 campaign represented. Even more, she underplays the *strategic* move many growers made in now publicly supporting a crackdown on undocumented workers. Hernández, "Crimes and Consequences."

23. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 54; García, *Operation Wetback*, 184, 193–97, 199–200, 228; "U.S. Spreads Net for 'Wetbacks': 500 Immigration Officials Set to Round Up Illegal Mexican Farm Workers," *New York Times*, June 13, 1954, 24; Gladwin Hill, "700 On Coast Open 'Wetback' Drive: Mobile Task Forces Round Up Border Jumpers in Test of New Federal Strategy," *New York Times*, June 18, 1954, 14; Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Stream Stemmed in Part: Federal Men Think They Have Border-Jumping in Hand by Patrol System," *New York Times*, June 20, 1954, 75; Gladwin Hill, "'Wetback' Purge to Shift to Texas: California Sector Considered Fairly Well Cleaned up—55,000 Seized in June," *New York Times*, July 5, 1954, 11; Norman Levine, "Dawn Raid Nets 57 Wetbacks: Some Must Leave Wives, Babies Here," *Long Beach Independent-Press-Telegram*, June 20, 1954; "Gestapo Methods Charges Made," *Humboldt Standard*, September 1, 1954, 18; Widoff to Knight, June 22, 1954, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9.

24. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 55; García, *Operation Wetback*, 165.

25. Numbers from Calavita, *Inside the State*, appendix A, 217; appendix B, 218; apprehension increased from 885,587 to 1,089,583, in Calavita's numbers; Swing quoted in ibid., 55; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 129; García, *Operation Wetback*, 231.

26. Baxter to Wight, August 17, 1954; Bulen to Baxter, September 2, 1954; H. H. Harris to McDonough, September 7, 1954; McDonough to Malcolm Harris, September 29, 1954, all in Knight Papers, Series 92, Box 32, File 7.

27. Burkett to Knight, February 17, 1955, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 10;

Hayes, "'Operation Wetback'," 17; Simcich to Brockway, February 27, 1954, National Archives, Pacific Region, RG 174, File: Mexican Labor Program, General Correspondence, 1954–65, accessed online: http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/ (ARC Identifier 296746) (accessed June 19, 2009).

28. Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, inside cover; on interview strategy, see, for example, notes, "3 Ntls—Manteca—Juan Lucio Camp (Tracy)," October 14, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

29. Notes, "Fr. McDonald—San Jose," September 4, 1955; notes, "6 Ntls—Cal. Pal, Corp. Camp #6—Planada," both in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6. For reports of isolation and long walks to town, see, inter alia, notes, "Fr. McDonald—San Jose," September 4, 1955; notes, "Five Nationals—Gondo Camp—Watsonville, Calif.," October 1, 1955; notes, "Two Natls—Rudy Avila Camp—Paterson," October 10, 1955; notes, "3 Natls—Manteca—Juan Lucio Camp (Tracy)," October 14, 1955; notes, "8 Natls—Tracy—Julian Ramirez Camp," October 14, 1955; all in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6; notes, "9 Natls—Joe Perez Camp—Terminous, Calif.," October 20, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 7. On the government camps, see notes, "Soledad—3 Ntls—Gov't Camp," September 27, 1955; notes, "1 Natl—Camp McCallum," October 4, 1955; notes, "Govt Camp—Soledad—8 nationals," October 5, 1955, all in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6. All translations in these notes are by Galarza. I have cleaned up syntax and punctuation as necessary in the notes for ease of reading.

30. Notes, "2 Nts. Amer. Fruit Camp—Brawley," December 5, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 7; notes, "Five Nationals—Gondo Camp—Watsonville," October 1, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6; Calavita, *Inside the State*, 78, details further examples, including one from Marysville, where three workers engaged in a work stoppage were deported on the trumped-up charge that one "might be a Communist."

31. Notes, "Soledad—3 Ntls—Gov't. Camp," September 27, 1955; notes, "3 Natls—Manteca—Juan Lucio Camp (Tracy)," October 14, 1955; notes, "Govt Camp—Soledad—8 nationals," October 5, 1955, all in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

32. Notes, "Five Nationals—Gondo Camp—Watsonville, Calif.," October 1, 1955; notes, "Camp Marchie—Santa Clara—3 Natls," October 5, 1955; notes, "Govt Camp—Soledad—8 nationals," October 5, 1955, all in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

33. Notes, "Govt Camp—Soledad—8 nationals," October 5, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6; grower quoted in Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 55.

34. Notes, "Three Natls—Benito Valdez Camp—Tracy," November 9, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 7. It was not unusual for workers to be paid by the hour for first pickings, and by piece rate later in the harvest. Notes, "8 Natls—Tracy—Julian Ramirez camp," October 14, 1955; notes, "3 Natls—Manteca—Juan Lucio Camp (Tracy)," October 14, 1955, both in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6.

35. Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 22; notes, "Govt Camp—Soledad—8 nationals," October 5, 1955; notes, "2 Nationals—Tomas Flores Camp—Tracy," October 16, 1955, both in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6. Galarza renders this long quotation slightly differently in *Strangers in Our Fields*, 23.

36. Notes, "9 Natls—Joe Perez Camp—Terminous, Calif.," October 20, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 7; notes, "Three Nationals—Italian Camp—Watsonville, Calif.," October 1, 1955; notes, "Two Natls—Rudy Avila Camp—Patterson," both in Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6; Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 23–24. For a comprehensive account of labor camp regulations, derived from the standard work contract, the ES-367 form used by the BES to check compliance with program requirements, and the California Labor Code, see "Comparison Between Minimum Housing Standards for Mexican Workers and Source Materials," n.d. [1956], Galarza Papers, Box 27, File 6. California's Labor Camp Requirements—Labor Code, Division 2, Part 9, Chapter 1, Article 4 (the Labor Camp Act) were republished together with a "Suggested Proper Layout and Maintenance of Employee Housing," in *Employee Housing: Minimum Requirements for Construction and Maintenance*, State of California, DIR/DIH (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1956).

37. A Report on 'Strangers in Our Fields, by Region X, Regional Office, Bureau of Employment Security," n.d. [1956], National Archives, Pacific Region, RG 174, File: Ernesto Galarza v. DiGiorgio Fruit Corp., 1956–64, accessed online: http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/ (ARC Identifier 296744) (accessed August 27, 2006), p. 4; all emphases original.

38. A. J. Norton to Farm Placement Field Staff, "Housing Inspections—FP-24-A Report," February 1, 1956, Galarza Papers, Box 28, File 9, emphasis original.

39. Wood to Knight, July 10, 1956; Knight to Kudell (Coachella Valley Farmers Association), July 26, 1956; Knight to Lane (Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association), August 6, 1956; Knight to Barcala (Blythe Growers, Inc.), August 6, 1956, all in Knight Papers, Series 92, Box 32, File 8.

40. Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 21; in addition to the notes and records in the Galarza Papers, Box 18, Files 6 and 7, a trove of details about the conditions faced by braceros during this period can be found in Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19.

41. For example, an edition of CBS TV's *The Big News*, entitled *Farm Labor Exposé*, was broadcast widely on August 9, 1956. That it hit its target is confirmed by the pained memo H. R. Zamora, a farm placement officer, to A. J. Norton, August 10, 1956, appended to "A Report on 'Strangers in Our Fields, by Region X, Regional Office, Bureau of Employment Security," n.d. [1956], National Archives, Pacific Region, RG 174, File: Ernesto Galarza v. DiGiorgio Fruit Corp., 1956–1964, accessed online: http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/ (ARC Identifier 296744) (accessed August 27, 2006).

STATE

1. McLain quoted in Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 83; Calavita, *Inside the State*, 73, 172.

2. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 182–83, 177.

3. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*; Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*, 116.

4. The language of legitimacy is drawn, of course, from Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*.

CHAPTER 9 *RFLOAC*

Epigraphs are from "A Report on 'Strangers in Our Fields, by Region X, Regional Office, Bureau of Employment Security," n.d. [1956], National Archives, Pacific Region, RG 174, File: Ernesto Galarza v. DiGiorgio Fruit Corp., 1956–1964, accessed online: http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/ (ARC Identifier 296744) (accessed August 27, 2006), pp. 2–3, emphases original; and Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7.

1. California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 91, 93.

2. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Security, Regional Foreign Labor Operations Advisory Committee (hereafter RFLOAC), minutes, February 13, 1957, p. 6, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7; U.S. Department of Labor, BES to All Associations (Employers) and Employers Contracting Mexican National Farm Workers Under Public Law 78, "Housing for Mexican National Agricultural Labor in the States of Arizona, California and Nevada," p. 2 (quoting the standard work contract, Article 2), Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3. Previous procedures, which allowed for actual inspection of facilities (and not merely employer self-reporting) are outlined in A. J. Norton to Farm Placement Field Staff, "Housing Inspections—FP-24-A Report," February 1, 1956, Galarza Papers, Box 28, File 9.

3. ES-367, attached to "Housing Inspections"; also attached: U.S. Department of Labor, BES, "Minimum Acceptable Standards for the Housing of Mexican National Workers," December 26, 1956, revised January 8, 1957; the fine was provided for in a 1948 law governing corruption in government business (U.S. Code Annotated Title 18, Section 1001); "Minimal Acceptable Standards for the Housing of Mexican National Workers," December 26, 1956, revised January 8, 1957, p. 1.

4. Edward F. Hayes to Employers of Mexican Nationals, "Housing Standards for Mexican Nationals, and Use of ES-367, Employer's Statement of Housing and Facilities," January 4, 1957 (attached to "Minimal Acceptable Standards"), Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3; Resolution, January 25, 1957; Miller to Knight, January 29, 1957, both in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12.

5. RFLOAC, minutes, November 9, 1954, pp. 3–5, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7; RFLOAC, minutes, September 16, 1956, quoted in Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 124; deposition of Glenn E. Brockway, December 20, 1960, in the matter of *Ernesto Galarza v. Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation et al.*, p. 9.

6. Deposition of Edward F. Hayes, January 22, 1963, in matter of *Ernesto Galarza v. Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation et al.*, p. 12; Region X Foreign Operations Advisory Committee Roster, revised August 2, 1956; RFLOAC, minutes, February 1, 1957, both in Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7.

7. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 125; deposition of Bruce W. Sanborn Jr., November 10 and December 2, 1960, in the matter of *Ernesto Galarza v. Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation et al.*, pp. 44, 46, 22–23, Galarza Papers, Box 41, File 1.

8. RFLOAC, minutes, November 9, 1954, pp. 6–7, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7.

9. Ibid.

10. RFLOAC, minutes, February 1, 1957, pp. 6–7, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7.

11. Thomas C. Campbell (California State Department of Employment) to all division offices, Division Notice No. 1768 Q, "Changes Relating to Housing for Mexican Nationals and Use of ES-367, Employer's Statement of Housing and Facilities," January 9, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3.

12. USDL, "Minimum Acceptable Standards for the Housing of Mexican National Workers, December 26, 1956 (Revised January 8, 1957)," Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3.

13. USDL, "Housing Mexican National Workers," March 25, 1957, amended; Thomas C. Campbell (California State Department of Employment) to all division offices, Division Notice No. 1793 Q, "BES Standards for Housing of Mexican Nationals, as Amended March 25, 1957, and Use of ES-367, Employer's Statement of Housing and Facilities," April 3, 1957, Department of Labor"; USDL, "Housing for Mexican National Agricultural Labor in the States of Arizona, California and Nevada," December 26, 1956, p. 4, all in Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3. See also "Housing Laws for Nationals May Be Eased," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, February 21, 1957, 13.

14. USDL, "Housing Mexican Workers," March 25, 1957, amended, p. 1, Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3.

15. Standard work contract, Article 2, quoted in USDL, "Housing for Mexican National Agricultural Labor in the States of Arizona, California, and Nevada," December 26, 1956, p. 2, Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3.

16. Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 2.

17. Ibid., 17.

18. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 264.

19. California State Board of Agriculture, Resolution, "RE: Investigation of the Publication 'Strangers in our Fields,'" September 17, 1956, p. 2, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 11; deposition of Edward F. Hayes, January 22, 1963, pp. 9, 11; see also p. 12 ("I had under my direction the reports from the local offices prepared answering 'Strangers in Our Fields'"). In *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 254, Galarza provides a different rendering of Hayes's deposed remarks. As his source he cites both p. 11 of the deposition transcript in his own file and p. 163 of his *Spiders in the House*; in neither place do words exactly like those quoted in *Farm Workers* appear; deposition of Glenn E. Brockway, December 20, 1960, p. 23; "A Report on 'Strangers in Our Fields, by Region X, Regional Office, Bureau of Employment Security," n.d. [1956], National Archives, Pacific Region, RG 174, File: Ernesto Galarza v. DiGiorgio Fruit Corp., 1956–1964, accessed online: http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/ (ARC Identifier 296744) (accessed August 27, 2006), p. 1; RFLOAC, minutes, November 16, 1956, p. 4, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7.

20. Deposition of Glenn E. Brockway, December 20, 1960, p. 25; deposition of Edward F. Hayes, January 22, 1963, pp. 19–20, 23.

21. "Report on 'Strangers in Our Fields,'" 4, 7, 8, 12, 15; Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 43, 45.

22. Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 75–76, 79; "Report on 'Strangers in Our Fields,'" 15.

23. "Preface to the Second Edition," in Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, iv; see also 30.

24. Rocco Siciliano (assistant secretary of labor) to Graham, November 23, 1956, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 13; "California Last Week," *Ukiah Daily Journal*, November 21, 1956.

25. The rules governing food for Mexican Nationals are usefully summarized in Galarza, *Strangers in Our Fields*, 40–41, and California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 89. Quotation from *Strangers in Our Fields*, 41, 42, 37.

26. "Report," 8; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 188–89; RFLOAC, minutes, February 1, 1957, p. 14, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7. One admission that BES knew of illegal practices is in Brockway to Murray, June 12, 1953, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 2; evidence of graft in the food service outside the Imperial can be found in notes, "Two Natls—Rudy Avilla Camp—Patterson," October 19, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 6; notes, "Nationals—Camp Management," July 25, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 1.

27. Minutes of meeting of RFLOAC Feeding Committee, and "Report and Preamble, RFLOAC Feeding Committee," in "Report on Bracero Feeding Standards, including Code for Foreign Labor Associations," pamphlet "Published by Growers Associations cooperating with the Foreign Labor Operations Advisory Committee, Region X, Bureau of Employment Security, U.S. Department of Labor," Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 1.

28. "Code of Foreign Labor Associations," 32–34, in "Report on Bracero Feeding Standard including Code of Foreign Labor Association."

29. Glenn Brockway to "Whom It May Concern," April 26, 1957, printed in "Report on Bracero Feeding Standards including Code of Foreign Labor Association," 1.

30. Galarza to secretary, RFLOAC, December 9, 1957; Smith to Galarza, December 23, 1957, both in Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7; on the DIR link, see Galarza to Roberts, December 9, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 9.

31. RFLOAC, minutes, June 6, 1957, p. 9, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7.

32. Shelley to Goodwin, February 25, 1958; Goodwin to Shelley, March 6, 1958; Goodwin to Galarza, May 5, 1958, all in Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7.

33. State of California, Department of Employment, Farm Placement Bulletin No. 139, "Annual Preseason Farm Placement Training Meeting," January 29, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 5; Huxley to Galarza, telegram, May 19, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 32, File 1.

34. Goodwin to Shelley, March 6, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7.

DOMINATION

1. Marx, *Capital*, 313, 478. Geoff Mann has urged me to use a more "modern" translation of *Capital*, which renders the phrase the "*subsumption* of labour to capital," but "subjection" is the better term. "Subsumption" means "absorption." Subjection means "domination, oppression, mastery, repression, suppression" (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*), and that is exactly what the bracero program was about.

2. Marx, *Capital*, 689; Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 299.

3. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 324.

CHAPTER 10 *Power in the Peach Bowl*

Epigraphs are from Hollingsworth to Galarza, August 23, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8; Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12; copy in Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8; Knight Papers, Series 92, Box 32, File 9.

1. Murray to Hayes, May 20, 1958; Galarza to Bond, May 1, 1958; Hayes to Rios, April 2, 1958, all in Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 9. When Galarza followed up his first letter on May 19, he received a telegram on May 20 from FPS employee James Bond saying he was working on it. Bond to Galarza, telegram, May 20, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 9.

2. Murray to Hayes, May 20, 1958; Bond to Galarza, May 26, 1958, both in Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 9. Data from California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: figure 41, 65.

3. Bond to Galarza, May 26, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 9. Once again, 1960s data are used. The Imperial harvest required 5,400 workers; the San Bernardino Harvest required 1,100. California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: figure 41, 58. The San Joaquin County data are from Rooney, "Effects of Mexican Farm Labor." Using compilations from unpublished FPS forms, Henry Anderson presents a much more complete picture of the degree of bracero domination by county for selected crops and selected weeks in *Harvest of Loneliness*, table 41, 108–10.

4. PL 78, Section 503. PL 78 is reprinted in California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1, appendix G, exhibit 1, 269–71, emphasis added; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 200, 201.

5. Consultants' report, 3, 45, 7.

6. Ibid., 7.

7. Ibid., 6, 13.

8. Ibid., 14, 17.

9. California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 146, 125.

10. Ibid., 99.

11. Ibid., 165; Ernesto Galarza, letter to editor, *Stockton Record*, June 15, 1960, clipping, Yellen Papers, Box 6, File 9.

12. RFLOAC, minutes, December 31, 1957, p. 13, Galarza Papers, Box 12, File 7, emphasis added; California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 102.

13. Department of Employment, "'Dominated Area' and 'Dominated Crop Activities,'" November 12, 1959, attached to Department of Employment, "Mexican Nationals in California Agriculture, 1942–1959," November 2, 1959, DoH Records, File 66; testimony

of George L. Roche, November 17, 1959, quoted in California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 103.

14. California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1, appendix G, exhibit 1, §503, 269; see Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 202.

15. Notes, "Yuba-Sutter Area, July–August, 1957," Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11; Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, table 41, 110; California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 75; Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 226–27. See USDA BAE, *Agricultural Labor Force*, 52–58. Though focused on the San Joaquin Valley, the analysis in this report of migratory paths in 1948 shows the importance of the Peach Bowl to domestic harvest workers both as a destination for San Joaquin workers and as a source region for the later San Joaquin cotton harvest.

16. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 226–27; notes, "Yuba-Sutter Area, July/August" (1957); notes, "Yuba-Sutter Area, July 1957"; notes, "Yuba-Sutter Notes Govt Camp, July 14, 1957," all in Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11. On the flood, see *Marysville Appeal Democrat*, January 2, 1956, typed copy, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11, and Hollingsworth to Galarza, August 23, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8 (which details results of a search through the *Appeal Democrat*'s files).

17. Notes, "Yuba-Sutter Area, July/August" (1957); notes, "Yuba-Sutter Area, July 1957"; notes, "Yuba-Sutter Notes Govt Camp, July 14, 1957"; notes, "August 17, 1957"; notes, "August 19, 1957, Marysville California"; notes, August 17, 1957 [about Rafael Fimbres and family]; notes, August 19, 1957; statement of James Robert, Yuba City, Calif., August 24, 1957; notes, "Camp on Pease Road—All Negro," Yuba City, August 25, 1957, all in Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11; see also the eighteen sworn affidavits from domestic workers refused work, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 6; Galarza to Knight, telegram, August 12, 1957; NAWU, "Behind the Scenes in the Peach Bowl of America, Sutter County—August, 1957," September 16, 1957; Knight to Galarza, telegram, August 12, 1957; Tannehill to Knight, October 2, 1957; all in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12; "Domestic Labor is Sought for Peach Harvest Work," *Fresno Bee*, August 14, 1957, 6–A; Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 205; Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, table 55, 223, 228–29 (including notes); Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 232.

18. "Mexicans in Jobs on Farms at Issue: Displacing U.S. Labor, Coast Union Says—Law Cited by Secretary Mitchell," *New York Times*, August 18, 1957, 50; Meany to Mitchell, telegram, August 14, 1957; Mitchell to Meany, telegram, August 15, 1957, both in Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8; NAWU, "Behind the Scenes in the Peach Bowl of America," September 12, 1957, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12. Simultaneously to the sparring between Meany and Mitchell, Governor Knight's administration found itself on the defensive as it continually parried charges that braceros were given preferential treatment in hiring. See "Knight Promises Foreign Farm Workers' Probe," *Hayward Daily Review*, August 13, 1957, 12; "Foreign Farm Worker Hiring Ignites Blast," *Hayward Daily Review*, August 14, 1957, 17; "State Denies American Farm Workers Shut Out," *Oakland Tribune*, August 14, 1957, 10; "Knight Denies Mexicans Get Farm Preference," *Fresno Bee*,

August 15, 1957, 9A; "State Will Probe Charge Foreign Help is Favored," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 15, 1957, 4; "Governor Denies Labor Favoritism," *Pasadena Star-News*, August 16, 1957, 32; "Governor Denies Mexicans Take Away Farm Jobs," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 16, 1957, 2.

19. Anonymous (not Galarza) to Bailey, n.d. [August 1957], Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8; Dellums and Bailey to Nixon, August 28, 1957, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12.

20. Dellums and Bailey to Nixon, August 28, 1957, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12.

21. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 233–34; Hollingsworth to Galarza, August 23, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8; notes, "Yuba City, Calif.," August 25, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11; statement of Ralph Willis, Marysville, California, August 5, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 6; NAWU, "Behind the Scenes in the Peach Bowl of America," September 16, 1957, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12.

22. J. A. Willis to Knight, telegram, August 14, 1957; J. A. Willis to Knight, letter, August 28, 1957, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12; "Mexicans in Jobs on Farms at Issue," *New York Times*, August 18, 1957, 50; for other examples, see Andru Rose to Knight, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12; Yellen to secretary of labor, June 4, 1959; Yellen to Representative D. S. Saund, June 4, 1959; Yellen to Saund, June 7, 1959; Yellen to secretary of labor, June 17, 1959, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4; affidavit of Lopez-Cortez, De La Cruz-Ron, Martinez-Dias, July 19, 1959; affidavit of Tapia Salas and others, July 19, 1959; statement of Martinez Diaz and De La Cruz-Ron, July 20, 1959; sworn statement of Genova Berra, October 8, 1959, all in Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19.

23. Knight to Willis, August 23, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8.

24. Notes, "Olympic Hotel, Marysville California, August 26, 1957," Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11; pledges to displace braceros in favor of domestic workers can be found in, for example, Burkett to CIO, May 11, 1954, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 9; Simcich to Brockway, February 27, 1955, NARA, RG 174, File: Mexican Labor Program, General Correspondence, 1954–1965, available online at arcweb.archives.gov (ARC Identifier: 296746; accessed July 20, 2009).

25. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 228, 304–7; Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 88; *Supplemental Statement in Support of HR 4575, Submitted to the Sub Committee on Labor Standards of the Education and Labor Committee, United States House of Representatives, by the United Packinghouse Workers of America, AFL-CIO* (Washington: Research Department, United Packinghouse Workers of America, AFL-CIO, 1958), republished in series: Pamphlets in American History, Labor: L 2631 (Microfiche Corporation of America); H. L. Mitchell, "Memorandum In Re: An Agreement for the Merger of the Agricultural Workers Union with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of N.A," July 7, 1956, Galarza Papers, Box 7, File 8; a summary of merger negotiations is in "The Record of Negotiation between Agricultural Workers and Packinghouse Workers—Correspondence, Meetings, Memoranda, etc.," Galarza Papers, Box 9, File 10. Besides chapter 7 above and chapter 12 below, see, generally, Watson, "Mixed Melody";

on the agreement with the contractors, see draft agreement, August 19, 1957, Yuba City, Calif.; DeWitt Tannehill and Helen Tannehill, report on Robert A. Stevens Ranch, both in Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11; on the contractors' interests, see Tannehill to Knight, October 2, 1957; Knight to Tannehill, October 18, 1957, both in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12.

26. On NAWU complaints, see, for example, Galarza to Knight, November 26, 1957; Galarza to Knight, December 4, 1957; Galarza to Knight, December 5, 1957; Galarza to Knight, December 6, 1957; Galarza to Knight, March 13, 1958; Stewart to Galarza, December 16, 1957; Stewart to Galarza, December 18, 1957; Knight to Galarza, March 31, 1958, all in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12; on Mexican church opposition to the bracero program at this time, see National Catholic Welfare Conference, N.C.W.C. News Service release, "Mexican Bishops Move to Stop Migration of Workers to U.S.," December 2, 1957, Vizzard Papers, Box 31, File 8; on the pruning ban, see Raymond Coppock, "Increased Domestic Labor Supply is Reported," *Modesto Bee*, November 2, 1957, 4A; Raymond Coppock, "Farmers Also Join Rush for More Horsepower," *Modesto Bee*, December 28, 1957, 4A; Louis Wurz and Fred Tomasini to Knight, November 6, 1957, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12; Knight to Galarza, May 6, 1958; Campbell to Schmidt, May 28 (two letters); Hayes to Farm Labor Associates (n.d., attached to Campbell letters), all in Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 13; Galarza to Duarte (San Joaquin Farm Production Association), December 9, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 46, File 2.

27. Wurz and Tomasini to Knight, November 6, 1957, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 12; A. J. Norton to all field representatives, "Increased Housing for Domestic Family-Type Workers," Galarza Papers, Box 28, File 9.

28. California Department of Employment, Division Notice No 1793 Q, "BES Standards for Housing of Mexican Nationals, as Amended, March 25, 1957, and Use of ES-367, Employer's Statement of Housing Facilities," April 3, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 3; A. J. Norton to all field representatives, "Increased Housing for Domestic Family-Type Workers," April 3, 1957, Galarza Papers, Box 28, File 9; notes, "Yuba-Sutter Area, July 1957," Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 11.

29. Coppock, "Increased Domestic Labor Supply," 4A.

30. For a growers association boast, see, Richard Lyttle, "Largest Labor Camp in Nation in Oxnard," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, March 6, 1958, 11; Anderson to Galarza, May 9, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3.

31. Anderson to Galarza, November 18, 1958; Anderson to Galarza, December 11, 1958, both in Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3.

32. State of California, DIR, DoH, *Public Hearing to Consider Proposed Rules and Regulation to Implement, Interpret, and Make Specific Provisions of the Labor Code Relating to Employee Housing*, vol. 1, Riverside, Calif., November 17, 1958, pp. 22, 26, vol. 2, Fresno, Calif., November 19, 1958, p. 23; Division of Housing Records, File 62. See also vol. 3, Marysville, Calif., November 20, 1958, p. 32.

33. DIR, DoH, *Public Hearings*, vol. 3, p. 46; see similar testimony—from growers in Chico, Hamilton City, and (again) Placerville—on pp. 48, 49, 55; right to privacy argu-

ments appear in a number of places throughout all three volumes of testimony, but are most prominent in vol. 3.

34. DoH, *Employee Housing (Labor Camps), 1959*, 8, 9, 10–11.

35. The President's Committee on Migratory Labor, *Suggested Language for Regulations of Agricultural Labor Camps* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1956). Pages 7–12 (of 15) are abstracted and collected in Galarza Papers, Box 27, File 4. Quotation from p. 11, Section 4(b).

36. Joe Gunterman, "The Gridley Farm Labor Center: A Report to California Citizens Committee for Agricultural Labor," October 25, 1959, pp. 2–3, 5, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8. Even with the camp closed in the winter, some four to five families managed to stay on in 1959–61; State of California, DIR, DoH, "Agricultural Labor Family Housing Study, Part 1: Farm Labor Centers, A Preliminary Report to the Advisory Committee," December 15, 1961, pp. 30–31. See also Guterman to Galarza, September 26, 1959, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 8.

37. DIR, DoH, "Agricultural Labor Family Housing Study, Part 1," pp. 26, 28–29, 37; Gunterman, "Gridley Farm Labor Center," 6.

38. Transcript of meeting, between Edward Hayes and others, and representatives of the CSO, Oxnard, California, January 15, 1959, p. 14, Galarza Papers, Box 20, File 6.

DEAD LABOR

1. Marx, *Capital*, 176; Marx, *Grundrisse*, 361; White, *Organic Machine*; this "interchapter" reworks a portion of Don Mitchell, "Work, Struggle, Death," esp. 182.

2. Marx, *Capital*, 294, 224.

CHAPTER 11 *Dead Labor—Literally*

Teague epigraph is from Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 229.

1. "Braceros' Deaths Pose Big Puzzle," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, August 8, 1957, B7; "Mystery of Mexican Farm Deaths Probed," *San Mateo Times*, August 8, 1957, 9; "Mexico Is Asked to Aid Bracero Deaths Probe," *Fresno Bee*, August 12, 1957, 13A; "Sudden Deaths of Nationals In County Studied by State," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 15, 1957, 1.

2. Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 230–32, quoting *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 11, 1957; also 225–29. *Note*: the copy of *Harvest of Loneliness* (#11) I consulted (attained from the California State Library, Sacramento, through interlibrary loan) is mispaginated, and chapter numbers are mislabeled. Readers consulting other copies may find that page numbers cited here do not correspond. (Pagination is broken at the end of chapter 10, p. 311. The chapter from which this and other footnotes related to worker deaths are drawn is labeled number 5 in my copy and begins on p. 178; the table of contents notes it as chapter 11, beginning on p. 313). It seems that the page numbers in this copy are from the abridged version of the report Anderson was eventually allowed to

produce by the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley, "The Bracero Program in California: With Particular Reference to Health Status, Attitudes, and Practices," University of California, School of Public Health, July 1961 (reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1976).

3. NAWU, press release, June 11, 1958, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 13; telegram, Bud Simpson (UPWA) to Congressman D. S. Saund (with copies to Department of Labor and all congressmen), n.d., Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 3; "12 Perish as Labor Camp Truck Burns," *Fresno Bee*, June 17, 1958, 1; "12 Panic Stricken Farm Aides Die in Truck Fire," *Modesto Bee*, June 17, 1958, 1; "12 Penned In Truck Dire in Fire: Eight Hospitalized in Monterey," *Oakland Tribune*, June 17, 1958, 1; "12 Men Burn to Death in Truck," *Pasadena Star-News*, June 17, 1958, 1; "12 Perish as Fire Sweeps Makeshift Bus," *San Mateo Times*, June 17, 1958, 1; "12 Mexicans Burn to Death inside Truck," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 1958, 5. The number of hospitalizations is from California DIR, Division of Industrial Safety, "Soledad Tragedy Indicates Need for Additional Precautions on Transportation of Workers," report to the governor's council, July, 1958, p. 5, Galarza Papers, Box 16, File 10. The quotation is from ibid., p. 6.

4. Galarza, *Tragedy at Chualar*, esp. 85–88. Galarza's *Tragedy at Chualar* is a reprint of the report he prepared as the leader of that investigation. The investigation was controversial because it was conducted by Galarza, who became the focus of a concerted attack by grower allies in Congress. See remarks of Representative Samuel Gubser, *Congressional Record*—House, October 6, 1963, 18637–46; Galarza to Gubser, October 22, 25, 26, 28, 1963, Galarza Papers, Box 16, File 4. Data calculated from data in California DIR, Division of Labor Statistics and Research, "Farm Transport Accidents, California, 1963" (n.d.), Galarza Papers, Box 16, File 10.

5. Senate Fact Finding Committee on Labor and Welfare, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 2 (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1963), figure 11, 37.

6. Harrigan to members (IVFA), June 1, 1959; Miranda to secretary of labor, June 8, 1959; Miranda to Saund, May 15, 1959; Miranda to secretary of labor, June 14, 1959; Goodwin to Miranda, June 23, 1963, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4; "Bracero Killed Loading Cattle Feed Grinder," *San Diego Union*, May 15, 1959, clipping, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4; "Investigate Braceros on Machinery," *Imperial Valley Press*, May 15, 1959, clipping, Draper Collection, Box 21, File 5.

7. Charles O'Brien (California assistant attorney general) to Galarza, May 14, 1959; Carr to Galarza, June 8, 1959; Carr to Edmund G. Brown, June 4, 1959; Galarza to Carr, July 7, 1959, all in Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 10; "Bracero Killed Loading Cattle Feed Grinder," *San Diego Union*, May 15, 1959; "Investigate Braceros on Machinery," *San Diego Union*, May 15, 1959; "Another Top Official Quits in Farm Quiz," *Oakland Tribune*, August 1, 1959, B11.

8. "State Confirms Illegal Hiring of Mexicans: Brown Aid Says Labor Charge True," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 31, 1959, clipping, Draper Collection, Box 21, File 5; "Carr Charges Shakedown Racket in Farm Service: State Probes Job Favoritism for Braceros," *Fresno Bee*, July 31, 1959, 1; "Farm Labor Probe Linked to Dismissal," *Oakland Tribune*,

July 30, 1959, 6; "County Farmers Not Involved in Dispute," *Hayward Daily Review*, August 1, 1959, 2; "Farm Labor Job Probe Launched," *Marysville Appeal Democrat*, July 31, 1959, 1.

9. "State Official Quits in Farm Unit Probe," *Fresno Bee*, August 1, 1959, 1; "Another Top Official Quits in Farm Quiz," *Oakland Tribune*, August 1. 1959, B11; "Mosk Broadens Farm Labor Investigation," *Modesto Bee*, August 2, 1959, A8; "Farm Aide Quits, Raps Democrats," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, August 13, 1959, A8; "Farm Parade: Bureau Members Urged to Study Crop Labor Problem," *Hayward Daily Review*, August 20, 1959, n.p.; "State Placement Shakeup Focuses Attention on Farm Labor Shortage," *Modesto Bee*, August 16, 1959, A2.

10. "Farm Labor Probe Linked to Dismissal," *Oakland Tribune*, July 30, 1959, 6; "State Farm Official Quits in Farm Unit Probe," *Fresno Bee*, August 1, 1959, 1; "Another Top Official Quits in Farm Quiz," *Oakland Tribune*, August 1, 1959, B11; "Mosk Broadens Farm Labor Investigation," *Modesto Bee*, August 2, 1959, A5; "Hayes Hits Probe Into Farm Jobs," *Marysville Appeal Democrat*, August 1, 1959, 1; "Probe Farm Unit's Chief is Shifted," *Fresno Bee*, August 8, 1959, 1; "Chief of State Farm Unit is Reassigned," *Modesto Bee*, August 9, 1959, 1; "Farm Parade: Bureau Members Urged to Study Crop Labor Problem," *Hayward Daily Review*, August 20, 1959, n.p.; "ExFarm Aide Hits Publicity," *Fresno Bee*, September 23, 1959, 23. The putative shortage of pickers in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys was well covered in the press, with much reporting on the progress of bracero recruiting, at the same time the story of the Carr-Mosk investigations was unfolding. "Lack of Help Poses Peach Crop Threat," *Fresno Bee*, August 8, 1959, 7B; "Picker Scarcity Threatens Big Loss in Peaches," *Fresno Bee*, August 12, 1959, 2C; "Most Canneries Plan to Stay Open Over Weekend," *Modesto Bee*, August 14, 1959, A1; "Harvest Will Call for Force of 100,000," *Fresno Bee*, August 14, 1959, 15A; "Pinched Peach Growers Fear $5 Million Loss," *Modesto Bee*, August 16, 1959, 1; "Cool Weather, More Braceros Ease Crop Crisis," *Modesto Bee*, August 17, 1959, B1; "Harvesting Woes Beset California: Migrant vs. Domestic Labor Dispute Rages as Crops Threaten to Spoil," *New York Times* August 23, 1959, 61.

11. "Perluss Scolds 12 Officers of Labor Service," *Modesto Bee*, November 19, 1959, B1; "Reprimands End Farm Labor Quiz," *Hayward Daily Review*, November 20, 1959, 2; deposition of Edward F. Hayes in matter of Ernesto Galarza v. Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation, et al., January 22, 1963, p. 5, Galarza Papers, Box 40, File 11.

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13. Memo, Harry Cooper to Charles O'Brien, December 29, 1959; Supplemental Report 16, "Mexican National Contract Labor Program: San Diego Farmers, Inc.," December 1, 1959; Supplemental Report 17, "Mexican National Contract Labor Program: San Diego Farmers, Inc.," December 1, 1959, all in Galarza Papers, Box 44, File 8; "Sweeping Labor Camp Probe Set," *San Mateo Times*, August 3, 1959, 1; "Wage Problem Underlies State Probe of Farm Labor," *Oakland Tribune*, August 3, 1959, 9; "Mexican Labor Turns on Wage Scale," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 3, 1959, 2; "Wages Underlie Current In-

vestigation into Hiring of Mexican Farm Laborers," *Humboldt Standard*, August 4, 1959, 2; "Farm Labor Probe Linked to Dismissal," *Oakland Tribune*, July 30, 1959, 6; "Another Top Official Quits in Farm Quiz," *Oakland Tribune*, August 1, 1959, B11; "Sweeping Labor Camp Probe Set," *San Mateo Times*, August 3, 1959, 1; "Mosk Comments on Farm Probe," *Marysville Appeal Democrat*, August 6, 1959, 11; "Farm Labor Probe May Touch County," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 7, 1959, 3; "Bracero Program May Face Test in Congress," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 24, 1959, 9; "Bracero Man in the Middle as Fight Rages Around Him," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 25, 1959, 9.

14. "State Finance Chief Raps Bracero Set Up," *Fresno Bee*, November 16, 1959, 4A; "Carr Proposes Uniform Wages for Braceros," *Modesto Bee*, November 16, 1959, B3; "Labor, State Official Hit Bracero Program," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, November 17, 1959, 1; "State Official Quits in Farm Unit Probe," *Fresno Bee*, August 1, 1959, 1; "Mosk Broadens Farm Labor Investigation," *Modesto Bee*, August 2, 1959, A5; "Major Farm Hit in Labor Probe," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 6, 1959, 10; "Federal Stop-Order on Indio Farmer," news from the U.S. Department of Labor (press release), August 3, 1959, NARA, RG174 (accessed online, ARC Identifier 296747; accessed August 27, 2006); "Bracero on Building Job May Send Crew Home," *Modesto Bee*, October 23, 1959.

15. "Secy. Mitchell Hits Camp 'Filth,'" *Oakland Tribune*, September 17, 1959, 1; "Mitchell Shuts Unclean Camp," *San Mateo Times*, September 17, 1959, 4; "Labor Secretary Pays Visit to Mexican Camps," *Ukiah Daily Journal*, September 17, 1959, 4; "Mitchell Raps 'Filthy' Bracero Labor Camps," *Modesto Bee*, September 17, 1959, B2; "Closing of State Labor Camp by Secretary Mitchell Puzzles State and County Officials," *Oakland Tribune*, September 18, 1959, 8, copy also in Draper Collection, Box 21, File 5.

16. "U.S. Shuts Second Camp Near San Jose," *Fresno Bee*, October 2, 1959; "Close Two Farm Labor Camps: Rancher Denies Reports True," *Pasadena Star-News*, October 3, 1959, 2; unmarked clipping (probably *San Francisco Call Bulletin*), September 30, 1959; "Farm Leader Can't Hire Braceros," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 23, 1960, both in Draper Collection, Box 21, File 5; "U.S. Shuts Down Farm Labor Camp," *Modesto Bee*, October 4, 1959, A4; "Stockton Regains 400 Moved Workers," *Modesto Bee*, October 6, 1959, B3; "U.S. Orders 226 Out of Dos Palos Camp," *Fresno Bee*, October 6, 1959, 1; "Bracero Camp Conditions Hit," *Marysville Appeal Democrat*, October 6, 1959, 16; "1,000 Mexicans Removed from State Farm Camps," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, October 6, 1959, 2; "Mexican Laborers Get Better Home," *Pasadena Independent*, October 9, 1959, n.p.

17. "144 'Slipshod' Labor Camps Closed to Protect Braceros," *Oakland Tribune*, November 18, 1959, 6; "Slipshod Operations Shut 144 Job Camps," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, November 18, 1959, D5; "Mexican Labor Problems Cited," *Marysville Appeal Democrat*, November 18, 1959, 1; "Close Two Farm Labor Camps: Rancher Denies Reports True," *Pasadena Star-News*, October 3, 1959, 2.

18. "Two County Labor Assns. Banned over Bracero Use," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, November 18, 1959, 1; Final Joint Determination In the Matter of Progressive Growers Association, et al., June 12, 1959, Galarza Papers, Box 47, File 13.

19. "Farm Labor Shortage Worst Since Days of War," *Oakland Tribune*, September 7,

1959, 1; "Senate Unit Will Sift Farm Labor Situation," *Fresno Bee*, August 20, 1959, 1; "Farm Parade: Bureau Members Urged to Study Crop Labor Problem," *Hayward Daily Review*, August 20, 1959, n.p.; "Farm Parade: Grain Growers Warned on Annual Migration of Waterfowl," *Hayward Daily Review*, August 27, 1959, n.p. See also Galarza to Goodman, August 19, 1959, Galarza Papers, Box 22, File 10. Reports produced for the committee include State of California, Department of Employment, "Mexican Nationals in California Agriculture, 1942–1959," November 2, 1959; Department of Employment, "'Dominated Areas' and 'Dominated Crop Activities,'" November 12, 1959; Department of Employment, "Adverse Effect as Reflected in User and Non-user Wage Differential," November 12, 1959, all in Division of Housing Records, File 66. The final reports are California Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, parts 1 and 2.

20. Josefina Cardenas Dias de Contreras to secretary of labor, May 25, 1959, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4; statement of Josefina Cardenas Dias de Contreras, Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19.

21. Estrada to state commissioner of insurance, July 9, 1957; Yellen to commissioner of insurance, July 9, 1957; Yellen to insurance commissioner, July 17, 1957; Yellen to insurance commissioner, July 21, 1957; Yellen to insurance commissioner, August 3, 1957, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 2. For a similar account of under- and nonpayment, see Galarza, "Notes, Dr. G-, Firebaugh," November 17, 1955, Galarza Papers, Box 18, File 4; Feichtmeir to Yellen, July 10, 1957; Yellen to Feichtmeir, July 11, 1957, both in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 2; Norton to Yellen, July 15, 1957; Strivers to Yellen, August 8, 1957; Yellen to insurance commissioner, August 3, 1957; Norton to Yellen, September 19, 1957, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 2; Thomas to Gilliss, April 23, 1958, Knight Papers, Series 42, Box 10, File 13.

22. Simonson (UPWA) to U.S. Department of Labor and Congressman Saund (date unknown); Galarza to Yellen, May 23, 1958; Yellen to chief, Border Patrol, May 31, 1958, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 3; Yellen to Ludwig, February 24, 1959; Yellen, "How the Continental Casualty Co. Is Leading the Doctors of the Imperial Valley Around by the Nose," February 25, 1959, both in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4; minutes and constitution, Brawley Braceros Union, May 2, 1958; Galarza to Bennett, June 6, 1958, both in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 3; Yellen to Belli, February 22, 1959, Yellen to secretary of labor, June 4, 1959, June 5, 1959, and June 17, 1959; Yellen to Saund, June 7, 1959, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4; Yellen to Brown, November 9, 1959, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 5; "Constitution, Imperial Co. Citizens Club," July 3, 1960, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 6; Niewenhous to Imperial Valley Medical Society, December 29, 1950; filing *Before the Judicial Committee of the California Medical Association in the Matter of the Appeal of Dr. Benjamin L. Yellen. . . ."* n.d. [1959], both in Yellen Papers, Box 34, File 4; Yellen to Imperial Valley Medical Society, January 20, 1959; Yellen to McGahey, February 12, 1959; Yellen to Belli, February 22, 1959, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4. Hundreds of the "yellow sheets" are collected in Yellen Papers, Box 1. A number of affidavits and notarized statements are available in their entirety on Calisphere. See esp. statement of Aguilar Beltran, May 15, 1959; statement of Pizano Farjado, May 19, 1959; statement of Josephina Cardenas Diaz de Contreras, May 25, 1959; statement of Torres Bustos, June 29, 1959; affidavit of Lopez-

Cortez, De La Cruz-Ron, Martinez-Dias, July 19, 1959; affidavit of Tapia Salas, July 19, 1959; statement of Martinez Dias and De La Cruz-Ron, July 20, 1959; statement of De La Cruz-Ron, July 22, 1959; statement of Magana Tinoco and nine others, August 4, 1959; statement of Lopez Ulloa and eight others, September 21, 1959; statement of Desiderio and three others, September 22, 1959; statement of Genova Berra, October 4, 1959; statement of Sisqueiros Sisqueiros, May 3, 1960, all in Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19; affidavit of Ramon Lopez-Lopez, September 20, 1959, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 5.

23. Niewenhouse to Imperial Valley Medical Society, December 29, 1958, Yellen Papers, Box 34, File 4. Transcripts of Yellen's broadcasts are available in Yellen Papers, Box 34, File 4, and mostly exhort braceros to seek out medical attention from the doctor of their choice. He does not name the other doctor in his broadcasts. For Yellen's defense of his actions, see filing *Before the Judicial Committee of the California Medical Association in the Matter of the Appeal of Dr. Benjamin L. Yellen . . . ,*" n.d. [1959], Yellen Papers, Box 34, File 4; Yellen to Imperial Valley Medical Society, January 20, 1959, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4.

24. On ongoing problems in the health program, see, for example, Yellen to Franke (Los Angeles Legal Aid Society), January 26, 1960 (two letters), January 29, 1960, March 29, 1960, Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 11; on deportations, see Yellen to Senator Harrison Williams, April 8, April 9, 1960; Yellen to Congressman Alfred Santangelo, September 26, October 9, 1960, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 6. On the hazards of bracero transportation, see Yellen to Governor Brown, November 9, 1959, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 5. Details of Yellen's Greyhound assault, subsequent jailing, trial, and appeal are convoluted (as is much with Yellen's life), but it does seem clear that the judge, working closely with farmers and the Border Patrol, sought to make an example of Yellen. See Yellen to Santangelo, September 26, October 9, November 11, December 19, 1960; Yellen to Petherbridge, November 11, December 8, December 10, 1960; Petherbridge to Yellen, December 9, 1960; Yellen to Mackey, October 16, 1960, all in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 6.

25. The struggles of Henry Anderson are laid out in considerable detail in Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?*, chap. 4. Anderson's own work, including *Harvest of Loneliness*, of course also provides valuable insight (see also Henry Anderson, "Fields of Bondage: The Mexican Contract Labor System in Industrialized Agriculture," mimeographed).

26. Anderson's diary is quoted in Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 119–20, see also 137n14. Gonzalez's timeline does not quite line up. In support of his passages about Anderson's tour of Calexico, he cites a passage of Anderson's diary (held in Anderson's personal collection) dated February 20, 1958, but that would have been well into Anderson's research, at least if I am correctly interpreting the implications of Anderson's own discussion of the timing of his research in *Harvest of Loneliness*. It is not clear if this is a retrospective diary entry. Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 149. Galarza's concerns with FPS IVFA collusion over the question of "winos" is expressed inter alia, for example, Galarza to Knight, March 26, 1958, Knight Papers, Series 42, File 13; Anderson to Galarza, April 22, 1958, Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3.

27. Anderson, "Social Justice," 5, 8, 9.

28. Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 5; Anderson to Galarza, July 28, 1958; Anderson to Galarza, August 19, 1958, both in Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3; Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 121, 124, 125–27.

29. Anderson to Galarza, September 3, 1958; Anderson to Galarza, September 8, 1958, both in Galarza Papers, Box 17, File 3; Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 129–30; Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 4; in an uncited passage, Gonzalez outlines Anderson's "discover[y]" that the UC administration was threatened with a cut in state funding during the next round of appropriations if it did not muzzle Anderson. See also Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 7. The parallels with another celebrated case of academic censorship occurring at exactly the same time, that of the environmental scientists working on the Atomic Energy Commission's, Project Chariot—a plan to build an "instant harbor" with nuclear explosives in Alaska—are exact. See Kirsch, *Proving Grounds*; O'Neill, *Firecracker Boys*; Millar and Mitchell, "Spectacular Failure, Contested Success."

30. Anderson, *Harvest of Loneliness*, 8–9; Gonzalez, *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?* 133. The abridged version is Henry Anderson, "The Bracero Program in California: With Particular Reference to Health Status, Attitudes, and Practices," University of California, School of Public Health, July 1961 (reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1976).

31. "Senator Calls for Study of Year Round Bracero Labor on Imperial Valley Farms," *Oakland Tribune*, December 21, 1959, clipping, Draper Collection, Box 21, File 5; Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 43–45; Vollman, *Imperial*, 531–37; Marx, *Capital*, 43.

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1. Guthman, *Agrarian Dreams*, 65–67.
2. Ibid., 68, citing Shoemaker, *Long Run Determinants of Land Values*.
3. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 221.
4. Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*, 85–86.
5. Ibid., 86–87; Guthman, *Agrarian Dreams*, 66.

CHAPTER 12 *Organizing Resistance*

Epigraphs are from Research Department, United Packinghouse Workers of America, AFL-CIO, Pamphlets in American History, Labor, L2631, Microfiche, Sanford, N.C.: Microfilming Corp. of America, 1979; and Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8.

1. AFL-CIO AWOC Research Paper #11, January 5, 1960, Draper Collection, Box 20, File 13.

2. An example of grower fear is "25 Growers to Fellow Growers," September 2, 1959, Galarza Papers, Box 48, File 1; the "off his back" quotation is from AFL-CIO director of organization Franz Daniel, quoted in London and Anderson, *So Shall You Reap*, 46. Histories of AWOC's efforts—almost uniformly critical—include Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*,

chap. 5; Meister and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, chap. 6. An analysis of AWOC's shortcomings (as compared to the later UFW) in terms of "strategic capacity" is Ganz, "Resources and Resourcefulness." A slightly more positive, but by no means glowing, assessment is in Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 164–66.

3. Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, 115; London and Anderson, *So Shall You Reap*, 94.

4. London and Anderson, *So Shall You Reap*, 95; Meisner and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 94–95; Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, 119–20.

5. Meisner and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 97; Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, chap. 5.

6. Galarza to Reuther, February 18, 1960, Galarza Papers, Box 8, File 1. Galarza professes in this letter of wanting "someday" to tell the full story he outlined. This is just what he did in *Farm Workers and Agri-business*.

7. Galarza lays out the gory details in *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 312–15, 322–25, 338–47. See also Mitchell to NAWU National Council, May 6, 1960, Galarza Papers, Box 8, File 2, which provides a no-holds-barred, in-the-moment analysis of the AFL-CIO machinations in setting up AWOC and undermining NAWU. There is much of interest in this analysis, including Mitchell's revival of old red-baiting charges against UPWA.

8. Galarza to V. Reuther, February 18, 1960, Galarza Papers, Box 8, File 1.

9. Mitchell to NAWU National Council, May 6, 1960, Galarza Papers, Box 8, File 2; Mitchell to Galarza, June 13, 1960; Galarza to Executive Board, NAWU and Executive Board AMC, June 24, 1960, both in Galarza Papers, Box 8, File 2 (Galarza admits that AWOC tactics are the same as the NFLU's in this last letter). Data on strike numbers from California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 2: 62–63. On the use of criminal syndicalism laws by growers in the period around World War I, see Don Mitchell, *Lie of the Land*; the specific strike Galarza was referring to was actually in 1934; see DeWitt, *Violence in the Fields*.

10. California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 127.

11. Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Committee," 100; "Farm Workers Picket Field Using Japanese," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 6, 1960, 11; "Lettuce Field Strike is Still On," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 7, 1960, 1; "Celery Strike Still On; U.S. Involved," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 14, 1960, 1; "Celery Crop Lost in Strike," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 23, 1960, 1; "Farm Strikers Picket Gov't Offices," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 20, 1960, 1; "U.S. Orders Jap Workers Off of Farm," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 21, 1960, 1; "Labor Secretary Intervened Here," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 22, 1960, 1.

12. "Celery Crop Lost in Strike," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 23, 1960, 1; "Lettuce Farmer Arrests Pickets, Says Crop Dumped," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 18, 1960, 1; "New Charge Filed in Celery Strike," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 29, 1960, 1; "Celery Farm Quiet Again After 200 Crates Packed," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 27, 1960, 1; "Pickers Shift to Cabbage," *Oxnard Press Courier*, April 30, 1960, 1; "Farmers Work Celery Fields; Pickets Watch," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, May 11, 1960, 1; "Labor Contractor Faces Charges in Celery Strike," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, May 12, 1960, 1.

13. Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 103–4; a brief, largely dismissive mention of the strike is also made in Meister and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 98; see also Anderson and London, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 51.

14. Anderson and London, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 105–7; "Brown Can't Act to Save Cherry Crop," *Hayward Daily Review*, June 4, 1960, 2; "Spreading Farm Strike Perils Crops," *Oakland Tribune*, June 7, 1960, 1. A suit filed by Podesta owners against AWOC and a number of its organizers seeking recompense for the orchard's losses apparently went nowhere. "Growers Ask $288,400 for 'Illegal Picketing,'" *Oakland Tribune*, July 27, 1960, 9.

15. Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 111–12; Meister and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 100, 113; John Studley, "Orchardists Win Writ in Labor Fight," *Oakland Tribune*, July 17, 1960, 1; "Judge Orders State to Continue Farm Worker Referrals," *Bakersfield Californian*, July 19, 1960, 36; "Job Director To Obey Farm Labor Order," *Hayward Daily Review*, July 19, 1960, 2; "State Sends Workers to One Orchard," *San Mateo Times*, July 19, 1960, 10; "State Furnishing Farm Labor for Struck Orchards," *Bakersfield Californian*, July 20, 1960, 24; "Court Orders Farm Labor Referrals," *Oakland Tribune*, August 15, 1960, 1.

16. Plant to Robertson (USDL), July 19, 1960, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296728.

17. "News from the U.S. Department of Labor," press release, July 19, 1960, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296727; "Fruit Grower Can't Hire 300 Braceros," *Oakland Tribune*, July 29, 1960; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 114; see also Meister and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 100.

18. Noisy Pickets Halt Work by Braceros," *Oakland Tribune*, August 2, 1960, 1; "2 Labor Organizers Held in Orchard Tiff," *Hayward Daily Review*, August 2, 1960, 2; report of telephone call, Merle Grimme to M. P. McCaffrey, August 1, 1960, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296730; Huxley to Bowers, August 2, 1960, NARA online, ARC Identifier, 296729; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, 116–17, tells a slight variation on the tale. The other standard histories of farm worker organizing during the period largely ignore the episode.

19. Meister and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 100; Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 158–60.

20. This episode is relayed in great detail in Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, chap. 5. See also the countersuit for libel, *Galarza v. Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation, et al.*, September 15, 1960, Galarza Papers, Box 41, File 6; "Di Giorgio Files Suit Over Movie," *Bakersfield Californian*, May 19, 1960, 1; "Union Film Attacked by Fruit Farm," *Hayward Daily Review*, May 19, 1960, 4.

21. Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, 106–20, quotation from 119–20.

22. California Council of Growers, *Newsletter*, November 17, 1961, quoted in ibid., 124; *Santa Rosa Herald*, September 15, 1960, quoted in Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 124; see also 125–26.

23. "Braceros Quit Ranch; Blame Put on Union," *Hayward Daily Review*, October 5, 1960, 5; "18 Mexican Nationals Walk Out for Higher Wages on Stockton Tomato Ranch," *Oakland Tribune*, October 5, 1960, 8; Lief Erickson, "Pitchforks and Pickets: 'Grapes of

Wrath' Again?" *Pasadena Independent Star-News*, October 9, 1960, 13; Lief Erickson, "U.S. Farmers Alarmed by Union Drive: California Strife Watched Closely by Grower Groups," *Oakland Tribune*, October 12, 1960, 1; "Labor Leader Optimistic in Farm Dispute," *Hayward Daily Review*, December 1, 1960, 19.

24. Tieburg to all employers of contract foreign workers, December 27, 1960, Galarza Papers, Box 21, File 1, emphasis original; "State Upholds Farm Labor Bus Charge," *Oakland Tribune*, September 29, 1960, 15; see the UPWA/AWOC plan of action in Louis Krainock to Norman Smith, "An Analysis and Report, with Suggestions," October 9, 1959, Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8 (hereafter Krainock Memo); Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, 124–27; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," chap. 7; Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 160–61; London and Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 51–53.

25. United Packinghouse, Food and Allied Workers, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Valley Lettuce Strike," May 1, 1961, part 2: 1, Draper Collection, Box 21, File 1; Victor Salandini, "An Objective Evaluation of the Labor Disputes in the Lettuce Industry in Imperial Valley California During January–March, 1961," MA thesis, St. Louis University, 2, copy in Salandini Papers, Box 3, File 8; *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 1, 1961, clipping, Draper Collection, Box 13, File 4.

26. For a description of "the hole," see Rob Barnes, "Mexican Workers Tagged as Pawns in Imperial Farm-Labor Conflict," *Bakersfield Californian*, February 8, 1961, 8. The early days of action are detailed in Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 136–37; UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Valley Lettuce Strike," part 2: 1. Details on the Church strike: Huxley (BES) to Lee Williams (BES), January 18, 1961, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296725; "In the Matter of: Imperial Valley Farmers' Association, El Centro, California; Edward F. Hayes Manager, Imperial Valley Farmers Association; Bruce Church, Inc. El Centro, California; Mike Schultz a/k/a Morris Schultz, El Centro California. Director's Decision," June 12, 1961, Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 13.

27. Salandini, "Objective Evaluation," 3; Huxley to Williams, January 14, 1961, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296725 ; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 139.

28. On Judge Heald, see Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 119–24; "Memorandum of Opinion on the Honorable Elmer W. Heald, Judge of the Superior Court of Imperial County," January 26, 1961, quoted in Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 140, see also 139; UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Valley Lettuce Strike," part 2: 1.

29. Krainock memo; Garin to Vizzard, April 21, 1961; Vizzard to Garin, May 2, 1961, both in Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8; UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Valley Lettuce Strike," part 2: 1–2; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 147–48.

30. Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*, 228; *Imperial Valley Press* quoted in UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Lettuce Strike," part 2: 2; numbers of deputies from news from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Statement by Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg Regarding

the Revocation of Authorization to Certain Imperial Valley Lettuce Growers to Employ Mexican Nationals Under the Migrant Labor Agreement of 1951, As Amended," March 4, 1961, 3, Draper Collection, Box 21, File 1.

31. "Violence Flares Again in Lettuce Dispute," *Pasadena Independent*, February 3, 1961, 1; "13 Unionists Charged in Farm Sitdown," *Oakland Tribune*, February 3, 1961, 13; "Farmer Caravan Heads for Imperial Valley," *Redlands Daily Facts*, January 31, 1961, 8; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 142–43.

32. "Braceros Removed from Camp," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, February 3, 1961, 2; "U.S. Court's Intervention Rejected as 'Peonage,'" *Los Angeles Mirror*, February 7, 1961, reprinted in UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Lettuce Strike," appendix, 2–3; see also part 3: 2, which indicates that the statement was made in a "communication" from Ambassador de Anzorena to Labor Secretary Goldberg on February 2; UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Lettuce Strike," part 2: 2; news from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Statement by Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg . . . ," March 4, 1961, 3; "Police Patrol Lettuce Camps," *Hayward Daily Review*, February 11, 1961, 1; Yellen to O'Connell, May 28, 1961, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 7; "Plot Against Farm Strike Efforts Told," *Humboldt Standard*, December 16, 1961.

33. Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 144–45; UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Lettuce Strike," part 2: 3; "Violence Erupts in Lettuce Camp," *Hayward Daily Review*, February 10, 1961, 18; "40 Held for Lettuce Field Brawl," *San Mateo Times*, February 10, 1961, 12; "Hearing Scheduled for 33 in Farm Strike Violence," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, February 15, 1961, 2.

34. See UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Valley Lettuce Strike," part 3. A photo of the Consulate pickets appears above, "Hearing Scheduled for 33 in Farm Strike Violence," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, February 15, 1961, 2; news from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Statement by Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg . . . ," 1; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 152; UPWA, "The Bracero and the 1961 Imperial Lettuce Strike," part 2: 3.

35. Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 154.

36. Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 159, 161; London and Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 52; Meisner and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 102; Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, 127; California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 2: 69n105; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 157–58.

37. Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 159–60.

38. Details of the congressional wrangling can be found in Kiser, "Bracero Program," chap. 5; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 153–60.

39. Craig, *Bracero Program*, 162–63, Goldberg quoted 164; statement of Jerry R. Holleman, assistant secretary of labor, Subcommittee on Equipment, Supplies, and Manpower, House Committee on Agriculture, March 17, 1961, quotations from pp. 1, 8, Draper Collection, Box 21, File 1.

40. Craig, *Bracero Program*, 169–74; John F. Kennedy, "Statement by the President Upon Signing Bill Governing Recruitment of Mexican Agricultural Workers," October 4,

1961, in John T. Wooley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8368 (accessed June 6, 2008).

41. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 142.

42. Craig, *Bracero Program*, 176; see also Kiser, "Bracero Program," 191–93.

43. Galarza, *Merchants of Labor*, 79. More than 439,000 braceros were contracted in 1959: Calavita, *Inside the State*, appendix B, 218. First set of data calculated from ibid. and Craig, *Bracero Program*, table 2, 182. "The Termination of the Bracero Program: Some Effects on Farm Labor and Migrant Housing Needs," Agricultural Economic Report No. 77 (Washington: USDA, Economic Research Service, 1965), table 3, 10.

44. Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 161; London and Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 56–57; Meister and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 104–5; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 161.

45. *Marsh v. Alabama*, 326 U.S. 501 (1946); London and Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 57–58.

46. London and Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 58–59; Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, 128; Meister and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 105; Thompson, "Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee," 161.

47. Robert Goodwin, "Address Before the National Farm Labor Conference," Tucson, February 10, 1964, reported in *News from the Department of Labor*, February 1964, and cited in Schmidt, *After the Bracero*, 15.

PROSPECT

1. Paglen, *Blank Spots on the Map*, 280; data calculated from the U.S. Census of Agriculture for the appropriate years.

2. Smith, *Uneven Development*, 119, 122, 120; Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

3. Harvey, "The Geopolitics of Capitalism" (1985), in *Spaces of Capital*, 312–44, quotations from 314, 315.

4. *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, "Prospect." The link between "prospect" and "landscape" is nicely explored in Cosgrove, "Prospect."

CHAPTER 13 *The Demise of the Bracero Program*

Epigraphs are from Goodwin to Miranda, June 23, 1963, Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 4; Henning to Galarza, June 27, 1963, Galarza Papers, Box 27, File 6; State of California, *Hearings on Farm Labor: To Seek Solutions to California's Farm Manpower Problems Caused by the Pending End of the Mexican National Program upon Expiration of Public Law 78, December 31, 1964*, Transcript, March 13, 1964, 9.

1. Tieburg to Galarza, January 2, 1961, Galarza Papers, Box 49, File 7; DIR, DoH, *Agricultural Labor Family Housing Study: Part 1: Farm Labor Centers*, December 15, 1961 (San Francisco: Department of Industrial Relations), 21, 26.

2. DIR,DoH, *Agricultural Labor Family Housing Study: Part 1*, 54; Senate Concurring

Resolution No. 27—Relative to a Study of Migrant Family Housing Needs, March 15, 1961, reprinted in ibid.

3. Statement of Bill Watson and Wayne Pendergraph, February 13, 1962, Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19; DIR,DoH, *Agricultural Labor Family Housing Study: Part 1*, 54.

4. Statement of Holloway and four others, February 28, 1962; statement of McKinney and two others, February 26, 1962, both in Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 19; Yellen to Smith, February 27, 1962; Smith to Yellen, March 1, 1962, both in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 8.

5. Yellen to Holleman, February 11, 1962; Yellen to U.S. Subcommittee on Migratory Labor, February 11, 1962, both in Yellen Papers, Box 3, File 8; statement of Ramirez and three others, February 20, 1962; statement of Dominguez, February 21, 1962, both in Yellen Papers, Box 19, File 5.

6. Robert Goodwin, "In the Matter of: Imperial Valley Farmers' Assn., Maggio Green Tops, Inc. Holtville, California, Administrator's Decision," May 8, 1963, Yellen Papers, Box 5, File 13; C. P. Trussell, "House Votes End to Bracero Plan: Mexican Farmhand Program is Defeated by 174 to 158," *New York Times*, May 30, 1963.

7. "Statement by Elizabeth A. Longenbohn," August 5, 1962, pp. 3–6, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296741. The explanations for the various practices were not contained in Longenbohn's affidavit (except as directly quoted), but rather emerged in the course of investigation; see "Joint Determination: In the Matter of Imperial Valley Farmers' Association and Mr. R. T. Englund and Mrs. R. T. 'Constance' Englund," January 28, 1963, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296740.

8. Ruben Salazar, "U.S. Charges Falsifying Pay Books: Aim Said to be Cutting of Piece Rates; Imperial Valley Grower Denies Charge," *Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1962, typescript copy, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296376. See also Bill Becker, "U.S. Investigates Bracero Program: Labor Department Checking False-Record Report," *New York Times*, January 21, 1963; J. Murray, U.S. Department of Labor, to Imperial Valley Farmers Association and R. T. Englund and Constance Englund, December 18, 1962, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296734, citing an affidavit by lawyers for the Englunds, dated November 29, 1962. The Joint Determination (see following note) on this case names different violations: Articles 10 and 19 of the standard work contract and Article 11 of the Migrant Labor Agreement.

9. Joint Determination in the matter of Imperial Valley Farmers' Association and Mr. R. T. Englund and Mrs. R. T. "Constance" Englund, January 28, 1963, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296740; news of the U.S. Department of Labor (press release), January 29, 1963, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296738.

10. Decision of the Regional Administrator Revoking Authorization of User-Member of Association to Employ Mexican National Workers Pursuant to the Migrant Labor Agreement, in the Matter of Imperial Valley Farmers Association and Mr. R. T. Englund and Mrs. R. T. "Constance" Englund, June 1963, NARA online, ARC Identifier 296739; "Firm Loses Appeal in Bracero Case," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, April 4, 1963, 16.

11. "Witness Charges Grower Abused Bracero Program," *Redlands Daily Facts*, March 30, 1963, 4; "One-Year Extension Asked for Mexican Workers' Plan," *New York*

Times, March 28, 1963; "Growers Seeking Mexican Labor: 2-Year Extension of Import Plan Urged on Congress," *New York Times*, March 29, 1963; "Unions, Churches Call for Halt to Imports of Mexican Workers," *New York Times*, March 30, 1963.

12. Reverend James L Vizzard, statement on PL 78, submitted to the Subcommittee on Equipment, Supplies and Manpower of the United States House of Representatives, March 29, 1963, Vizzard Papers, Box 3, File 9, citing 1961 testimony of Fred Bailey of the American Grange and J. Blaine Quinn of the California Grange.

13. For the letter-writing campaign see, for example, Pitts (CFL) to Representative Augustus Hawkins, May 9, 1963; Sussman (California State Council of the American Veterans Committee) to Hawkins, May 22, 1963; Bassett (Office Employees International Union) to Hawkins, May 23, 1963; Hall (National Council of Churches) to Hawkins, May 27, 1963, all in Hawkins Papers, accessed online through Calisphere (accessed June 16, 2008). On the House vote and Kennedy position, see C. P. Trussell, "House Votes End to Bracero Plan: Mexican Farmhand Program is Defeated by 174 to 158," *New York Times*, May 30, 1963; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 182–85; Craig mistakes the date of the House vote, putting it on March 29, 1963, an error repeated in several other accounts. Roybal's comments from Roybal Reports, For Release Week of June 10, 1963, "House Defeats Mexican 'Bracero' Program to End Widespread Injury to U.S. Workers," Yellen Papers, Box 4, File 1.

14. Sutter-Yuba Health Department, Application for Migrant Health Project Grant, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, December 7, 1962, Project Plan, p. 1; Yolo County Health Department, for Migrant Health Project Grant, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, December 4, 1962, Project Plan, p. 2, both in Division of Housing Records, File 71.

15. Santa Clara County Health Department, for Migrant Health Project Grant, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, April 9, 1963, Project Plan, p. 10; Solano County Department of Public Health, for Migrant Health Project Grant, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, March 26, 1963, Project Plan, pp. 1–2; similar plans for education were laid out for Sonoma and Santa Clara counties: Sonoma County Health Department, for Migrant Health Project Grant, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, April 8, 1963, Project Plan, p. 2; Santa Clara County Health Department, for Migrant Health Project Grant, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, April 9, 1963, Project Plan, p. 8, all in Division of Housing Records, File 71; see also the summary of appalling housing conditions made by Governor Brown (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor: To Seek Solution to California's Farm Manpower Problems Caused by the Pending End of the Mexican National Program upon Expiration of Public Law 78, December 31, 1964*, transcript, March 13, 1964, p. 3

16. Garin to Vizzard June 8, July 3, October 14, November 22, December 29, 1963; Vizzard to Garin, June 27, 1963, all in Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8.

17. The diplomatic note, dated June 21, 1963, was reprinted in the *Congressional Record* on August 15, 1963, and is extensively quoted in Craig, *Bracero Program*, 186–88.

18. On the political pressures and considerations that shaped Brown's actions in the

last year of the program and the first months after it was over, see Mesplé, *From Clovis to the Capitol*, 35–41; examples from the small farmer letter-writing campaign include, for example, Keistner to Hawkins, July 28, 1963; Ramsey to Hawkins, July 29, 1963; Mueller to Hawkins, September 6, 1963; Prater to Hawkins, September 6, 1963; Murdy to Hawkins, September 26, 1963; all in Calisphere; the legislative history is laid out in Kiser, "Bracero Program," 263, 268; Craig, *Bracero Program*, 191–93; C. P. Trussell, "'Braceros' Entry Sought in Senate," *New York Times*, July 19, 1963; C. P. Trussell, "Bill on Braceros Passed by Senate: Measure Permits Importing of Mexican Farmhands," *New York Times*, August 16, 1963; C. P. Trussell, "House Unit Would Extend Bracero Act," *New York Times*, August 22, 1963; "Defeat for the Migrants," *New York Times*, November 3, 1963.

19. *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 11, 13.

20. Press release, "Roybal Urges Employment Services for Domestic Migratory Farm Workers," June 22, 1963, Yellen Papers, Box 4, File 1; testimony of Fred Heringer (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 18; testimony of George Lyon (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 11 (relaying a resolution of California Growers Farm Labor Committee).

21. *Congressional Record*—Senate, August 15, 1963, copy, Vizzard Papers, Box 31, File 6. See also Thor and Allee, *Stabilizing Temporary Farm Labor Supply*; Garin to Vizzard, November 22, 1963, Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8; testimony of Richard Johnson and Keith Mets (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 14. See the countertestimony of Henry Anderson in ibid., 51. "House Unit Bars Rights Bid in Extending Braceros Plan," *New York Times*, August 28, 1963.

22. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 149. The relevant section of PL 414 (USCA 1101 (a) (15) (H) (ii)) allowed admission for work for periods ranging from three days to three years; California State Senate Fact Finding Committee, *California's Farm Labor Problems*, part 1: 127–28.

23. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 148. See also the testimony of Undersecretary of Labor John Henning (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 5; Vizzard to Sherry, July 1, 1963, Vizzard Papers, Box 31, File 6.

24. Schmidt, *After the Bracero*, 38–39.

25. Ibid., 39–40; Vizzard to Garin, November 27, 1963; Garin to Vizzard, December 3, 1963, both in Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8; comments of Representative Henry Gonzalez, *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27744.

26. Testimony of John Quinn (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 23; see also the testimony of Fred Heringer, ibid., 22, who allowed for the possibility of also recruiting young women.

27. "Wirtz Enlists Youth in Recruiting Drive for Help as Field Labor," *Pasadena Independent*, May 5, 1965, 8; Bill Broom, "Youths Sought in Crop Crisis: Athletes Recruited on Farms," *Long Beach Independent*, May 6, 1965, A-18; "Advisors Hit Appeals for Braceros," *Long Beach Independent-Press-Telegram*, May 30, 1965, 1; "Farm Panel Says 'No' on Braceros," *Oakland Tribune*, May 30, 1965, 4; "Big Farms Phase Out Braceros," *Long Beach Independent*, June 16, 1965, 11; "Domestic Labor Replaces Braceros," *Oakland Tribune*,

June 16, 1963, 1; Neil Gilbride, "Wirtz Target of Anger in New 'Grapes of Wrath,'" *Oxnard Press-Courier*, November 29, 1965, 23; unmarked clippings, Salandini Papers, Box 7, File 1; "37 Alabama Youth Quit Salinas Jobs," *Long Beach Independent*, January 23, 1965, A-14.

28. Testimony of Keith Mets (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 17. See also Bill Broom, "Migrant Farm Workers' Families Create Major Problem of Housing," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, January 25, 1965, B1, B2; testimony of John Henning (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 6–7, 9; "Jack" Henning, long affiliated with California organized labor, served as director of the California DIR in the first Pat Brown administration. He was director of DIR at the time of the DoH housing reports discussed in this chapter. USDA, Economic Research Service, *Termination of the Bracero Program*.

29. James L. Vizzard, S.J., National Catholic Rural Life Conference, "Statement before U.S. Department of Labor Hearing on Criteria for Clearance Orders for Aliens Performing Temporary Service of Labor," November 30, 1964, p. 5, Vizzard Papers, Box 3, File 10; testimony of Keith Mets (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 15, 17; testimony of Fred Heringer, ibid., 21; testimony of Father William Hughes (Catholic Rural Life Conference), ibid., 56; testimony of Herbert Newman (H. N. Contractors), ibid., 54; testimony of Violet Rotan (farm worker), ibid., 66.

30. Schmidt, *After the Bracero*, 96–97; *California Farmer*, April 4, 1964, quoted in ibid., 33; testimony of Richard Johnson (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 14; testimony of Fred Heringer, ibid., 21.

31. Testimony of Thomas Pitts (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 26; Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*.

32. California Growers Farm Labor Committee quoted in *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 11; the second quotation is from testimony of Keith Mets, ibid., 16, emphasis original; "Secretary of Labor Labeled Dictatorial by Economist," *Bakersfield Californian*, February 2, 1965, 32 (reporter's paraphrase); Thor and Mamer, *California Agricultural Labor Requirements*.

33. Testimony of Thomas Pitts (State of California), *Hearings on Farm Labor*, 26, 28. Pitts's comments were echoed in testimony by Mary McFarland (California Migrant Ministry), ibid., 39. Testimony of Louis Krainock, ibid., 42; see also the testimony of Grace McDonald (California Farm Research and Legislative Committee), ibid., 4; and of Henry Anderson (Citizens for Farm Labor), ibid., 52.

34. Testimony of Lincoln Fairley, ibid., 46–47.

35. "Governor Outlines State Farm Labor Program," *Redlands Daily Facts*, December 1, 1944, 1; "Delinquents Proposed for Farm Labor: Brown Claims Support for Phase-Out," *San Mateo Times*, December 1, 1964, 1; "Teamsters Back Brown Farm Labor Plan," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, December 2, 1964, 25; "Brown Says California Will Make Use of Poverty Program to Get Farm Labor," *Humboldt Standard*, December 7, 1965, 1; "The Bracero Program and Its Aftermath: An Historical Summary," prepared for the use of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture, April 1, 1965, 16–18; Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 164–65; Thor and Mamer, *California Agricultural Labor Requirements*.

36. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 148; U.S. Department of Labor press release, Decem-

ber 13, 1964, Galarza Papers, Box 27, File 6; "Labor's Wirtz Announced Plan," *Hayward Daily Review*, December 13, 1964, 6; "Wirtz Reveals Task Force to Recruit Farm Workers," *Redlands Daily Facts*, December 14, 1965, 1; "Launch Big Drive for Farm Labor," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, December 14, 1964, 2; "Recruit Team Begins Farm Worker Sign-Up," *Redlands Daily Facts*, December 21, 1964, 15; "Bracero Pay Offered to Domestics," *Pasadena Star-News*, December 15, 1964, 2.

37. The analysis of paystubs appears as an inset in "Bracero Program Ends, Calif. Workers Rebuffed: Who Will Harvest the Crops," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, December 31, 1964, A-3; "Growers Scuttle New Farm Labor Plan: Cancel Order for Domestic Workers," *Bakersfield Californian*, December 31, 1964, 1, 14 (reporter's paraphrase); see also "Braceros Ruled Out in Imperial Valley," *Bakersfield Californian*, January 1, 1965, 2; "Growers' Hiring Policy Hit by State," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, January 1, 1965, 3; "Crop Loss Blamed on Lack of Labor," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, January 1, 1965, 1, 3; "Wirtz Assigns Top Aide to Calif. Bracero Crisis," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, January 3, 1965, A2; "Henning to Confer with Brown, Answers Antle," *Redlands Daily Facts*, January 4, 1965, 1.

38. "Imperial Valley Growers Accused of Sabotage," *Redlands Daily Facts*, January 12, 1965, 6; "Farmers Accused by Wirtz: 'Unreal' Picture Given, He Says, No Shortage," *Long Beach Independent*, January 15, 1965, 1; "Willard Wirtz Stands Firm Against Bracero Program," *Redlands Daily Facts*, February 25, 1965, 1; "Labor Leaders Testify to Surplus of Workers: Growers Say No Help Needed from Department of Labor," *Imperial Hometown Review*, March 30, 1965; "Lettuce Growers in Valley Report 'Greatest Loss' Ever," *San Diego Union*, April 3, 1965, both clippings in Salandini Papers, Box 8, File 11.

39. "The Bracero Program and Its Aftermath: An Historical Summary," 3–4. In remarks before the House, Charles M. Teague reported that through September 1965, some 19,000 undocumented Mexicans were apprehended in California, up from 5,000 for all of 1964. *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27740. See also Calavita, *Inside the State*, 150; "Imperial Grower Sees No Lettuce Acreage Cut," *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1965, clipping, Salandini Papers, Box 9, File 11. Compare Garin to Vizzard, February 5, 1965, Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8, wherein Garin reminds Vizzard that lettuce growers will only plant if they know they can get labor at harvest time.

40. Debate between representatives Cohelen, Teague, Gubser, Hagen, and others, *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27739–27757; "'Clean Up' Growers Council Tells Members After Wirtz Tour; Farm Bureau Criticizes Labor Secretary," *Imperial Valley Weekly*, April 1, 1965, clipping, Salandini Papers, Box 9, File 10; "Wirtz Finishes Tour: Hits 'Slum' Quarters," *Long Beach Press Telegram*, March 19, 1965, 5; "Farm Head Implies Wirtz Visit a Sham," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, March 31, 1965, 16; "Domestic Labor Available: Nationals Held on Standby," *Van Nuys News*, January 26, 1965, B32; "Wirtz OKs Using Asiatics to Save Southland Lemons," *Pasadena Independent*, March 8, 1965, 1; "Tieburg Asks Braceros for Melon Harvest," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, May 15, 1965, 7; "Calif. Farms to Get Bracero Help Today," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, August 16, 1965, A3; "Address of John F. Henning, Under Secretary of Labor Before the National Farm Labor Conference of the U.S. Department of Labor, San Francisco, California, January 9, 1967,"

News from the Department of Labor, Draper Collection, Box 21, File 4; "Panel Votes to Cut Wirtz' Farm Power," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, September 3, 1965, 7; "Humphrey Breaks Tie, Kills Bid to End Wirtz' Bracero Control," *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, September 14, 1965, 2. See also the comments of *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27756.

41. "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Assess the Impact of the Termination of the Bracero Program on the Total Economy of California," Sacramento, March 31, 1966, Salandini Papers, Box 7, File 5.

LANDSCAPE

1. Schein, "Place of Landscape," 663, quoting Duncan, *City as Text*, 12, 16. Schein has developed his arguments in a series of essays over the last decade or so, culminating in *Racialized Landscapes*.

2. Rose, "Landscapes and Labyrinths," 457.

3. Schein, "Methodological Framework," 383; Schein, "Digging in Your Own Backyard."

CHAPTER 14 *The Ever-New, Ever-Same*

Epigraphs are from Vizzard Papers, Box 23, File 8; "Visalia Farm Laborers Flex Muscles: Nation Begins to Take Notice," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 26, 1965, 9.

1. This is the argument I make in *Lie of the Land*, and elsewhere. It was also the argument I made in the proposal for the grant that allowed me to conduct much of the research for this book.

2. Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 149; Henderson, *California and the Fictions of Capital*, 83–90.

3. "Visalia Farm Laborers Flex Muscles: Nation Begins to Take Notice," *Oxnard Press-Courier*, August 26, 1965, 9; "Farm Laborers Aroused Over Rent Hikes in 'Shantytowns,'" *Humboldt Standard*, August 27, 1965, 24; "Shantytown Rift as Braceros Go," *San Mateo Times*, August 26, 1965, 3.

4. See note 5 and "Labor Row Brews on Tomato Hands," *Oakland Tribune*, August 29, 1965, 5.

5. Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, 131–42; London and Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap*, 146–49; Meister and Loftis, *Long Time Coming*, 119–25; Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 65–86; Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 167–72. The narrative of the Delano strike is pieced together from these accounts.

6. Pre–World War II Filipino militancy in agricultural California is examined in DeWitt, *Violence in the Fields*, and Federal Writers' Project, *Unionization of Filipinos*. Surprisingly little has been written about Filipino farm labor in the postwar period, especially before the rise of the UFW. The standard UFW histories do a good job of situating Filipino interests and activism within the context of the formation of the larger movement, if a

less complete job of examining the tensions that entailed. A crucial starting point for understanding the long struggle of Filipino workers and especially developments in the 1960s is Scharlin and Villanueva, *Philip Vera Cruz*; Rony, "Coalitions, Race, and Labor."

7. Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 172; all the works cited in note 5 weigh in on the development of this strike, given its eventual historical significance.

8. Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency*, 147.

9. Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers*, 173; Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California*; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*.

10. Cf. Calavita, *Inside the State*, 155–56, which traces the debates over the effectiveness—or lack thereof—of INS enforcement practices and the development of an undocumented labor force during this era.

11. Transcript of Proceedings, *Symposium on Farm Mechanization*, Assembly Interim Committee on Agriculture, Joint Meeting with Sub-Committee on Economic Development of the Assembly Interim Committee on Ways & Means, October 14, 1965, University of California, Davis, p. 24; Wells, *Strawberry Fields*.

12. *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27755; Thor and Mamer, *California Agricultural Labor Requirements*, tables 33–37, 59–64; de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture* 80–85.

13. de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, 81; figures calculated from ibid., table 4.8, 82.

14. Ibid., 84–86.

15. *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27755.

16. Comments of Lorenzen, transcript of Proceedings, 18–21; comments of Robert Holt (Tomato Growers Association), ibid., 60.

17. Comments of Robert Holt (Tomato Growers Association), ibid., 60–64. For a timeline of developments related to mechanization of the tomato harvest, see de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, table 5.1, 97–99.

18. Comments of Ernie Blackwelder, transcript of Proceedings, 107; de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, 111, 144, 147.

19. Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, 124–27.

20. Ibid., 88.

21. Ibid., 88–89, quoting Arlington, "Science, Government, and Enterprise"; Thor and Mamer, *California Agricultural Labor Requirements*, 139–40.

22. Remarks of C. M. Teague, *Congressional Record*—House, October 20, 1965, 27742; Thor and Mamer, *California Agricultural Labor Requirements*, 138; de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, 72.

23. de Janvry, LeVeen, and Runsten, *Mechanization in California Agriculture*, 72–80.

24. See Jim McCauley, "State's New Rich—the Crop Pickers," *Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram*, September 18, 1966; Walker, *Conquest of Bread*, 257; "Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee to Assess the Impact of the Termination of the Bracero Program on the Total Economy of California," 18, Salandini Papers, Box 7, File 2.

25. Parsons, "Geographer Looks at the San Joaquin Valley," 380, 383.

CONCLUSION

1. McWilliams, "They Saved the Crops." Only a few years later, in *North from Mexico*, 266, McWilliams makes it clear that the loss to workers the handover to the WFA entailed was well known by July 1943.

2. Rowell to Silvermaster, January 24, 1944, Hollenberg Papers, Carton 5, File 33; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 48.

3. McWilliams, *California*, 165–68; Bugarin and Lopez, *Farm Workers in California*, various pages.

4. Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-business*, 375, 7.

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